

(AFP) — Queen Victoria's 200th birthday is being celebrated in Jordan. The queen reigned from 1837 to 1901 and was the last monarch of the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. She was the mother of King Edward VII and the grandmother of King George VI. Her reign was marked by the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the British Empire. She was also known for her philanthropy and her support of the arts. Her birthday is celebrated in many countries around the world.

(AFP) — The Israeli government has rejected a proposal to allow Palestinian water sources in the West Bank. The proposal was made by the Palestinian Authority and was part of a larger agreement on water resources. The Israeli government said that the proposal was not in line with its policy on water resources in the West Bank. It said that it would not allow any new water sources to be developed in the West Bank without its approval.

(AFP) — The U.S. State Department has announced that it will not issue visas to certain members of the Syrian government. The announcement was made in response to the Syrian government's actions in the region. The U.S. said that it was concerned about the human rights situation in Syria and that it wanted to show its support for the Syrian people. The Syrian government said that it was a sovereign state and that it had the right to decide who it wanted to issue visas to.

Panel debate repeal of laws

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament's Judiciary and Finance committees held a joint meeting Monday to discuss a draft law for repealing anti-Israeli legislation and ending the economic boycott with the enemy and heard the views of a number of Parliament members and experts invited to attend the session. Parliament Speaker Saed Hayel Sour, who attended the session, said after the meeting that the joint committee has scheduled another meeting for Sunday to hear other experts' views in this matter. These will include presidents of the chambers of commerce and industry as well as economist Fahed Al Fanek. During Monday's meeting several proposals were made which could be dealt with in the next session. "We are not in a hurry to finish this subject as we are keen on scrutinising every detail and every idea and cover the subject in all its aspects," added Mr. Sour. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh as well as the ministers of finance, industry and trade, justice and labour attended the committee meeting along with several deputies and His Majesty King Hussein's advisor on international law affairs.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Jordanians vote in nationwide municipal elections today

Prime minister vows to ensure fair and free polls, urges citizens to vote and elect right candidates

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanians vote today in the first nationwide municipal polls to elect local officials in what is seen as a test for the maturity of the Kingdom's electorate six years into a democratisation process.

On the eve of the elections, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker vowed that the government would do everything to ensure free and fair elections and called on voters to turn out in mass to exercise their democratic rights and enhance the democratisation process in the Kingdom.

At stake are 259 councils with nine members and a mayor each. Almost all political parties, licensed since the adoption of the Political Parties Law in 1992, are fielding candidates in the race for clout in local administration.

Also elected will be half the 40 members of the Greater Amman Municipal Council. The other 20 as well as a mayor will be

nominated by the government under the new Municipalities Law adopted in 1994.

It is the first time that Jordan is holding elections to all the municipal councils on the same day. The way was cleared for nationwide elections on the same day when the government dissolved all councils and appointed temporary committees last year ahead of polls following the enactment of the new law.

Centrist parties have come out in strength to field candidates. The mainstream Islamist party, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), says it has hand-picked only certain councils for its candidates, and leftist groups say they are trying their luck in the elections mainly to make their political presence felt.

Interviews with voters have indicated that the electorate was more oriented towards electing candidates who could serve them and improve services in their constituencies rather than choosing their

comfortable atmosphere. Specially qualified teams will supervise both the voting process and ballot counting, he said, adding that the government had taken every measure and made every arrangement to ensure the smooth conduct of the entire process.

Sharif Zeid called on citizens to turn out for voting.

"It is the duty of every citizen to participate in this important event and help choose the right persons to serve their local community," said the prime minister. "Participating in the municipal elections is a national responsibility reflecting the Jordanian people's determination to contribute to the success of the democratic system and to ensure that better municipal services are offered by the elected councils," he said.

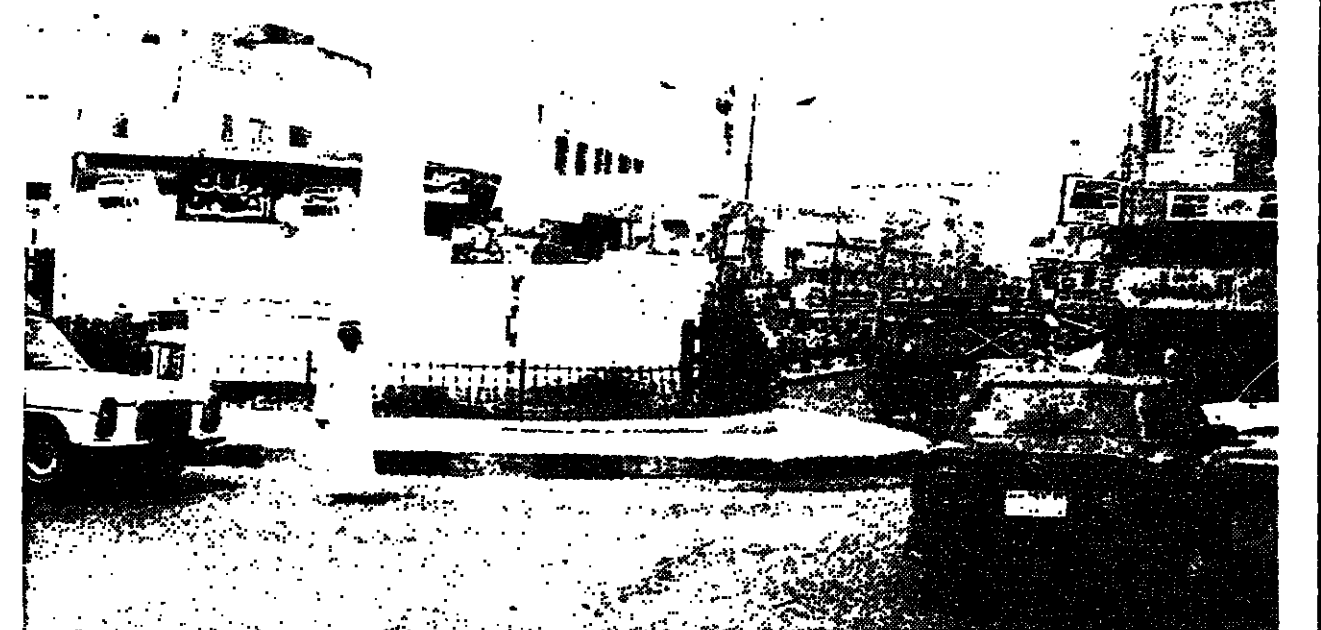
"Our country needs the combined efforts of various sectors, national and political forces, official and private organisations and private individuals to serve the common cause," he added.

Voting centres open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. Local officials are empowered to extend the voting period by another two hours if warranted. Results are expected late at night and early Wednesday.

Nearly 900,000 voters —

of an estimated electorate of 1.3 million — registered for the last parliamentary elections, held in 1993. Only about 750,000 of them actually cast their ballots.

Many observers expect an average turnout, with some voters opting to take advantage of the holiday to do other business.



Main streets in Jordanian towns are bedecked with campaign banners of candidates ahead of today's municipal elections (Photo by Rana Hussein)

Israel insists on control of W. Bank water sources

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel insists on retaining control over most of the West Bank's water resources even after Palestinian autonomy is established throughout the area, Israel's agriculture minister said Monday. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) condemned the demand.

The dispute over water, one of the most precious resources in the Middle East, marked the latest snag in efforts to reach agreement on an Israeli troop withdrawal from West Bank towns and Palestinian elections by the target date of July 25.

The Israeli position on water rights came out of discussions between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and water experts prior to planned talks with the PLO in Florence, Italy, this week.

Agriculture Minister Nacov Tsur told reporters that Israel would oppose any change in the way water is pumped out of the large aquifer under the West Bank.

"There is water that is used in Israel and water that is used by the Palestinians," he said. "It is all from the same bathtub and we are not about to change the division ... to

dry up areas of Israel and enrich parts of the Palestinian territory."

Currently, the West Bank aquifer supplies Israel with 740 million cubic metres annually, about 40 per cent of the water used by its 5.5 million citizens, according to the Middle East Intelligence Digest.

The 1.2 million Palestinians of the West Bank get about 130 million cubic metres annually from the aquifer — about 2.5 times less per person than Israelis.

Agriculture ministry spokesman Roni Hassid said that under the Israeli proposal, the Palestinians would not be permitted to conduct new drillings for water in the West Bank, except on a limited scale in the Jordan Valley.

Faisal Hussein, the top PLO official in Jerusalem, termed the Israeli position "disgusting."

"It is not just," he said. "They are not the masters and we are not the slaves." He said that while Palestinians suffer constant water shortages, Israeli settlers in the West Bank have "everything including swimming pools."

"We will not agree to this

Regent receives Sudanese message

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday received a message from Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir addressed to His Majesty King Hussein believed to deal with the latest crisis between Sudan and Egypt.

The message was delivered by Mahdi Ibrahim, a minister of state in the Sudanese government, in a meeting attended by Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Minister of State Taha Hababeh and the Sudanese ambassador to Jordan, Ali Abdul Rahman Numeiri.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, which reported the Regent's meeting with Mr. Ibrahim, did not give any details of the message.

but diplomatic sources said they believed it dealt with the row between Cairo and Khartoum after Egypt accused Sudan of involvement in a foiled assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa on June 26. Khartoum has denied the charges.

The sources would not elaborate. It was, however, believed that Lieutenant-General Bashir would be requesting King Hussein, who enjoys good relations with President Mubarak, to mediate between Cairo and Khartoum.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said this week that Cairo did not feel that there was any need for mediation from any quarters after reports said Gen. Bashir also sought help from Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

The Sudanese leader, whose relations with President Mubarak had been at best jumpy after he took power in 1989, has sent messages to most Arab leaders on his crisis with Egypt. Khartoum has also called for Arab League mediation to defuse the dispute.

According to Arab diplomats, Sudan also appeared to be exploring possibilities of convening an Arab summit. However, said the diplomats, prospects for convening a summit were almost non-existent.

Mr. Ibrahim, who arrived here at noon Monday, paid tribute to Jordanian-Sudanese relations in an arrival statement and said his visit aimed at enhancing bilateral ties.

It was the second visit of a Sudanese minister to Jordan in two days. Salahuddin Mohammad Al Karrar, the Sudanese minister of mining and energy, made a stopover in Amman on Sunday on his way home from Baghdad, where he delivered a message from Gen. Bashir to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

In Amman, Mr. Karrar held talks with his Jordanian counterpart, Samih Darwazah, on Jordanian cooperation in oil and energy-related areas.

While in Baghdad, Mr. Karrar and Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rashid signed an agreement calling for Iraqi-Sudanese cooperation in oil and mining.

Reporting the agreement, the Iraqi media said Sudan had benefited from Iraqi expertise in oil exploration and processing.

The exact nature of the Sudanese-Iraqi agreement was not immediately known.

South Pacific blasts French attack on Rainbow Warrior

SYDNEY (Agencies) — South Pacific nations on Monday angrily denounced the storming of Greenpeace flagship Rainbow Warrior by French commandos, describing the use of tear-gas as excessive and another blow to France's badly dented image.

The storming of the ship by masked commandos near France's Mururoa atoll nuclear test site unleashed a wave of official protest, with the region's major powers, Australia and New Zealand, summoning French envoys to explain the incident.

Television pictures of the action and radio reports in which the Rainbow Warrior crew could be heard screaming and gasping from the tear-gas, led news reports around the region.

Smashing windows, breaking down doors and spraying tear-gas, French commandos overran the ship as it neared a south Pacific atoll where France plans to resume controversial nuclear testing.

The confrontation Sunday came 10 years after scuba divers from the French secret service bombed and sank the original Rainbow Warrior in Auckland Harbor, New Zealand, on July 10, 1985.

No one was injured, the French government said in a statement. Greenpeace said two people were injured by tear-gas.

Some 150 commandos in black helmets and jumpsuits boarded the Rainbow Warrior II at 6:40 a.m. local time, removing two dozen people from the vessel, Greenpeace officials said in Paris.

About 10 of those taken from the ship were held on Mururoa for questioning, French Prosecutor Jean-Pierre Dreno said in Paris. He said the ship had 22 crew members, three passengers and six journalists.

"We were all gassed," Greenpeace spokesman Jean-Luc Thierry said by telephone from the ship shortly before communications were broken off.

The voyage of the Rainbow Warrior II was aimed at calling world attention to French plans to set off eight underground nuclear test blasts between September and May, abandoning a moratorium declared by former President Francois Mitterrand in 1992.

The nuclear testing plans, announced in June by French President Jacques Chirac, have sparked widespread

Turkey says 36 more rebels killed in Iraq

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish troops and Kurdish rebels clashed in northern Iraq on Monday in fighting which left 36 guerrillas dead, local officials said.

The clashes occurred just south of the border from the Turkish town of Cukurca, the regional governor's office said in Diyarbakir, southeast Turkey.

Since Wednesday, about 3,000 Turkish troops, backed by warplanes and helicopters, have been striking at Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) bases, suspected as launching points for attacks into Turkey.

Some 650 rebels were believed to be based in the area. The government-reported rebel death toll went up to 146 since the beginning of the operation.

Battles were going on as far as 40 kilometres inside northern Iraq in an area where the borders of Turkey, Iran and Iraq converge.

The operation extends along a 70-kilometre long area parallel to the border. It involves the section of northern Iraq controlled by Iraqi Kurds who want independence from Baghdad. The area is protected by a U.S.-led allied air force.

The statement said four soldiers were also killed during the clashes with the rebels on Monday, increasing the military death toll to 19 since last Wednesday.

The area is mountainous terrain with high temperatures.

The official Anatolia news agency reported on Monday troops would withdraw in a

Abequa sentenced to 16 years in jail

By Rana Hussein Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Criminal Court on Monday found Mohammad Ismael Abequa, a Jordanian-American accused of strangling his estranged wife in the U.S., guilty of second degree murder and kidnapping and sentenced him to 16 years with hard labour.

Presiding Judge Abdul Rahman Tawfiq sentenced Mr. Abequa to 15 years for the murder of his wife Nihal, and an additional year for kidnapping the couple's two children, Lisa 7, and Sami 4.

Judge Tawfiq said the Prosecutor General Khalid Darwish had sought the maximum penalty arguing that it was a premeditated murder, "but the court believes it was a second degree murder."

Judge Tawfiq said the prosecution did not provide enough substantial evidence to "convince us that it was a premeditated murder."

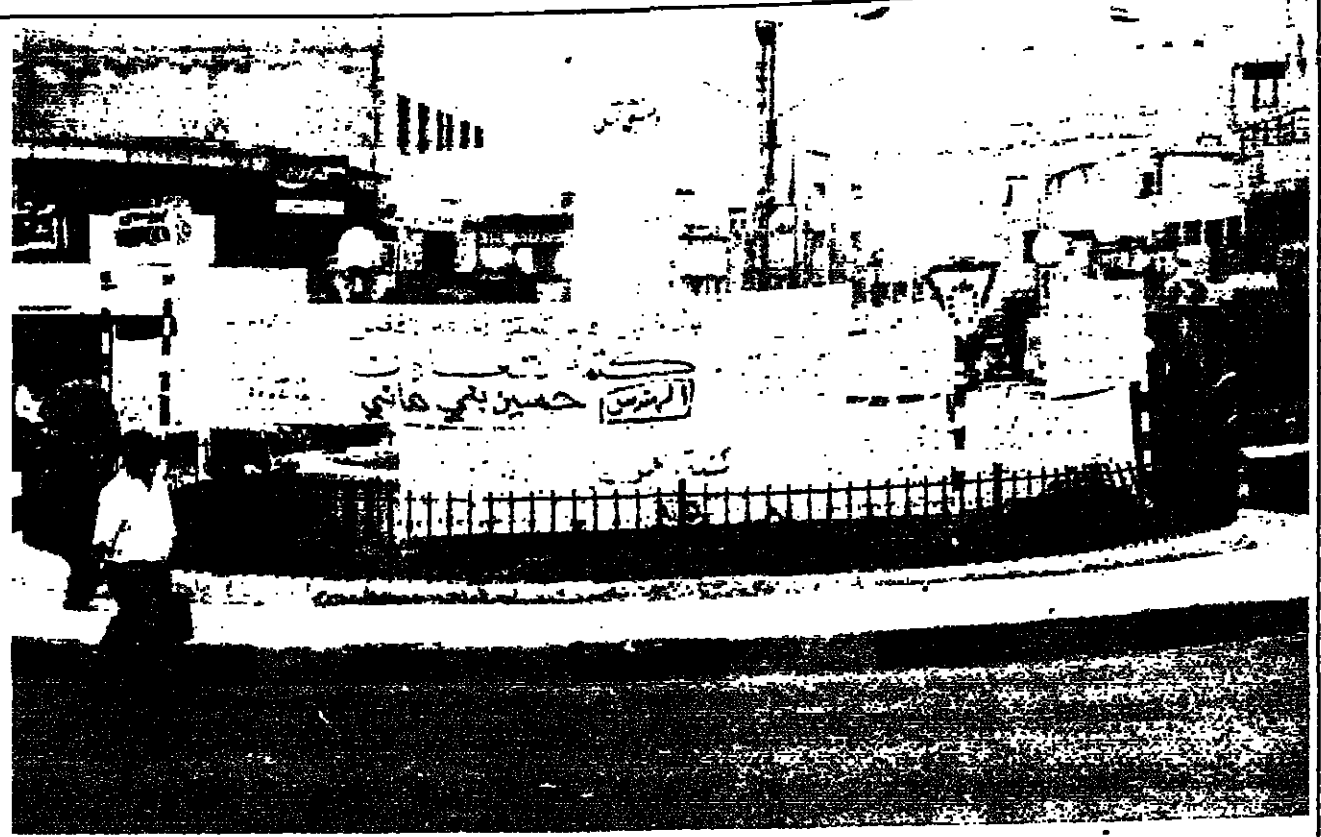
He said that a telephone call that Mr. Abequa made to his separated wife on July 3, one day before the murder, to inform her that he was coming for a visit "is an indication that he did not plan to kill her the following day."

"The surprise element is absent since he informed his wife he was coming," Judge Tawfiq said, adding that the fact that the man ate breakfast and spent three hours in his wife's apartment was strong evidence that he did not intend to kill her.

A July 3 reservation made.



ELECTION SPIRIT IN IRBID: The streets of the northern town of Irbid is bedecked with campaign banners of candidates in today's (Tuesday's) municipal elections (photos by Rana Hussein)



Authorities explain customs exemption procedures for taxis

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Department of Customs has defined the procedures for taxi owners to exchange their vehicles for custom-free cars or benefit from partial exemption from customs duties if they do not want to surrender their present vehicles.

The move to offer customs exemption for small public transport vehicles as well as service taxis running on specific routes — was approved by the government last month in line with Jordan's efforts to modernise its transport vehicles.

Many of Jordan's taxis and service cars are outdated. Some of them are 30 years old. The condition and appearance of many of them are also bad despite the enforcement of a regulation that all vehicles should be produced at the licensing department for close inspections once a year, at the time of renewing the vehicle licence.

A circular sent by the Department of Customs to the concerned departments outlined the procedures that owners of taxis and service cars should follow to benefit from the government offer of customs duty exemption.

Under the procedures, the exemption is applicable only to cars with an engine capacity of not less than 1,600 cc. Cars with a passenger capacity of eight will be allowed to operate only on inter-city routes and to and from Queen Alia International Airport.

The circular spelled out the steps that owners should follow from securing a first approval from the central licensing authorities to obtaining licence plates for the new cars.

Owners should surrender their old cars to the garages of the Vehicle Licensing Department at the Amman customs centre near the Jordan Radio and Television station or at the Zarqa Free Zone. Those who surrender the vehicles, subject to certain parameters concerning model and other factors, will get total exemption from customs duties, sales tax and all other charges.

According to official sources, the government intends to auction off the surrendered cars after changing

their licence plates to privately-owned plates. This has not been officially confirmed yet.

Those who do not want to surrender their cars but would like to dispose of the vehicle after dismantling them would get a 50 per cent exemption from customs duties on the new car. Sales tax and other charges will also be applied. The dismantling of the car — basically cutting the chassis of the vehicle — before it is returned to the owner should be carried out under the supervision of a technical committee representing the customs and vehicle licensing authorities.

The technical committee will also be in charge of inspecting new vehicles and ensuring that they conform to the specifications laid down by the authorities. One of the main conditions is that the new car should be of a current year or the immediately preceding or following year's model.

In simple terms, it means that for a taxi to be registered for the first time in 1995 it should be of a 1995, 1994 or 1996 model.

Amid the move to modernise small public transport vehicles, Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh has sought to put to rest reports that the government was contemplating a reduction in customs duties for all automobiles. The reports had depressed the car market in the country as many potential buyers opted to put off their purchases awaiting the expected reduction.

Mr. Jaradneh issued an official statement last week denying that the government was studying any such moves. However, the rumours have not died down. People who claim to have "inside sources" insist that a customs reduction for cars is in the offing.

At the same time, official sources say that the rumours appeared to have stemmed from a series of proposals prepared by the Ministry of Finance and customs last year outlining various sets of options for possible reductions.

One of those proposals was adopted last year and the government announced a 27 to 45 per cent reduction in customs duties on all automobiles.

Israel and Israeli cousins welcome Rifkind's promotion

The Times of London and The Daily Telegraph

A SENIOR Israeli diplomat forecast yesterday (July 7) that the appointment of Malcolm Rifkind, hailed in the Hebrew press, would improve Anglo-Israeli relations, already significantly closer over the past 12 months.

"Rifkind was the first (British) defence secretary to visit Israel, and we are expecting a tightening of the good relations we had with his predecessor," Israel's ambassador to London, Moshe Raviv, told Yediot Achronot. In an interview with the Tel Aviv daily, Mr. Rifkind — claimed by the London Jewish Chronicle as the first Jewish foreign secretary since Rufus Isaacs, the Marquess of Reading, in 1931 — revealed that he had close relatives living in Israel and that he had made private trips to see them before his successful visit here as defence secretary.

Mr. Rifkind is credited by Israel as being the driving force behind Britain's decision to end the arms embargo imposed after the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, thereby heralding a dramatic improvement in ties, including a visit by the Duke of Edinburgh, the first by a member of the British royal family.

Mr. Rifkind, who told Yediot that Britain's interests in the Arab World "cannot be ignored," has said that religion is "supremely irrelevant" to his political life.

That claim has not stopped Israeli officials gloating quietly that the Foreign Office, so long dismissed as a nest of Arabists, is in Jewish hands. It was unclear how the news would be received in the Arab World, although Mr. Rifkind made a favourable impression among Gulf Arab rulers, especially the emir of Kuwait, when he visited in his previous position.

Bernard Josephs, diplomatic correspondent of the Jewish Chronicle, claimed that, due to the Middle East peace process, the promotion of a Jew to such a sensitive post would no longer have damaging repercussions for Britain's standing in the oil-



British Chief Secretary to the Treasury William Waldegrave, Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind (centre) and Defence Secretary Michael Portillo (left) (AFP photo)

rich Middle East. "There was a time when the appointment of a Jewish Foreign Secretary would have caused 'complications' with some of Britain's main Middle East allies," Mr. Josephs wrote. "Today it is clear that the Arab sensitivity on such issues is dramatically on the wane."

The promotion of Mr. Rifkind as the first Jewish foreign secretary in half a century has delighted his many relatives in Israel, where Britain has often been regarded as sympathetic to the Arab cause.

"I am very, very proud and happy for him," said Ian Ben-Yehuda, a first cousin.

"I knew that it has been his ambition for a long time to become Foreign Secretary and now he has achieved it."

"I heard about it on the BBC World Service and I will be writing him a letter. I expect he is very busy these days."

Mr. Ben-Yehuda, 44, a computer programmer at Agrexco, Israel's agricultural export company, grew up with Mr. Rifkind in Edinburgh and moved to Israel in 1980 after marrying an Israeli.

"It was a small community. There were just a few big families and we always mixed with the Jews."

Mr. Rifkind's relatives include early Jewish settlers who moved to British-ruled Palestine in the 1930s and lived through the subsequent Arab-Israeli wars.

Abie Cohen, 76, an uncle who was born in Stockport and joined an Israeli kibbutz in 1934, "I read about it in the newspapers this morning. It is a great feel-

ing. It's a great honour that somebody in your family has reached such a high position in government."

Mr. Cohen, who operated and maintained farming equipment, served in the British army's Jewish Brigade during the World War II. He now lives in a moshav, or agricultural community, outside the Mediterranean port town of Ashdod.

Annie Caspi, 79, an aunt who has yet to lose her Scottish lilt, moved to Tel Aviv at the height of Arab-Jewish rioting in 1936.

She said she remembered attending Mr. Rifkind's brit, the traditional Jewish circumcision ceremony held eight days after the birth of a boy.

"My phone has not stopped ringing with friends calling to congratulate me," she said. "I keep on telling everyone about it. I'm so proud of him. He is a really nice guy."

Unlike many of his relatives, Mr. Rifkind, 49, was not gripped by the Zionist pioneering spirit. He has, however, made several private trips to Israel and is a practising Jew.

Last December, he became the first defence secretary to visit Israel and was also seen as instrumental in lifting the arms embargo against Israel, imposed after the invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

The Israeli press (July 6) portrayed the new foreign secretary as a friend of Israel. But there was also concern that his new job would stop him from expressing his sympathies openly, particularly among Foreign Office officials

deemed to be incorrigibly pro-Arab.

However, Israeli officials said British-Israeli relations had warmed under Douglas Hurd and that they expected little change.

Among Mr. Rifkind's relatives, Mr. Ben-Yehuda said: "Malcolm told me many years ago that his first priority is to the British public because they are the people who voted for him. But obviously if it is an issue that does not affect British either way, he is for Israel."

Mr. Rifkind is the first Foreign Secretary to be a practising Jew since the creation of the state of Israel almost 50 years ago.

But he denied (July 6) that his religion was either at odds with the traditional Arabist culture of the Foreign Office or would affect British foreign policy towards the Middle East.

"I think the Foreign Office represents the British interest; it does not represent the interest of other parts of the world," he said.

"It is for the foreign secretary to identify the best way to advance those interests. That is the only relevant criteria."

Despite a pledge of even-handedness in Britain's future attitude towards the Arab-Israeli peace process, Mr. Rifkind's appointment was widely welcomed by Jewish organisations in Britain.

The MP for Pentlands is known as a committed religiousist and is a member of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Stuart Polak, director of the Conservative Friends of Israel, said: "We are very pleased and hope he will continue to give all the support to the peace process that is necessary." The only fears expressed in some quarters were that Mr. Rifkind will be so conscious of his background that he will bend towards sympathy for the Palestinians rather than risk being accused of bias towards Israel. Mr. Rifkind was a founder member of the CFI when he entered Parliament in 1974, and during his previous stint as a junior minister at the Foreign Office in the mid-1980s took a particular interest in the plight of Jewish refugees in the former Soviet Union.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oman, Saudi Arabia sign border document

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia and Oman on Monday signed documents completing the demarcation of their joint borders of over 650 kilometres, Saudi officials said. Officials from both countries signed the final maps on the borders between the two states at a ceremony in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Saudi Arabia has desert frontiers with Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan that have been largely undefined for many years. Saudi Arabia and Oman signed an agreement in 1990 for the demarcation of their joint borders of 657 kilometres. Lieutenant-General Mujab Bin Mohammad Al Qahtani, commander of the Saudi border guards, told the ceremony the agreement took into consideration "the regulating of border authorities between the two countries with the aim of strengthening cooperation between border guards." He said the agreement enshrined "the freedom of movement of beduin (nomadic) herdsman" and provided them with help.

Turkey boosts ties with Uzbek

TASHKENT (R) — Turkey has agreed to deepen ties with Uzbekistan and boost investment during the first visit by Prime Minister Tansil Ciller to the Central Asian state. Mr. Ciller signed four bilateral agreements and opened a \$200 million Turkish Esimbank credit line on Sunday in a drive to develop links with the newly independent states of Central Asia, which, except for Tajikistan, have languages and cultures similar to Turkey's. Turkish President Suleyman Demirel visited Kazakhstan last month, and Foreign Minister Erdal Ingu has in Turkmenistan over the weekend. "Turkey is the closest friendly country to Uzbekistan — they are not just friends but family," Uzbek President Islam Karimov told a joint news conference on Sunday night.

Woman wins walking competition in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — A 71-year-old woman has won a walking competition for women in southern Iran, newspapers reported here Monday. Sadot Nushan came in first in the race in which a hundred other women and young girls participated in the city of Shiraz, they said. The youngest participant was five years old.

\$1b claim filed against Sudan after Mubarak attack

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian lawyer is demanding \$1 billion in compensation from Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir for his alleged part in the attempted assassination of Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak, judicial officials said Sunday. In a suit filed at a Cairo court Albert Alfred Shenouda said that "vehicles in the presidential motorcade were damaged" during the attack on June 26 in Addis Ababa. He said these were "goods belonging to the people," adding that the "Egyptian people were profoundly shocked by the attack ordered by the Sudanese regime." The money should go to thousands of Egyptians who lost their homes in torrential rains which fell in November in southern Egypt, he added. The trial will begin on Sept. 3, sources added. Mr. Mubarak has also blamed Sudan for masterminding the gun attack from which he escaped unscathed.

Iran ends naval exercises in Gulf

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian naval forces have ended eight days of large-scale tactical exercises in the Gulf involving attack craft and combat aircraft, the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Monday. The games were carried out Sunday over an area of 30,000 square kilometres in the northern part of the Gulf. Some 56,000 personnel from the navy and the Revolutionary Guards Corps' naval arm, as well as the air force, participated in the exercises. IRNA said the final manoeuvres were designed to test the capability of Iran's naval forces in conducting electronic warfare operations. The Iranians have been seeking to upgrade these capabilities amid a major rearmament programme launched after the 1980-88 war with Iraq.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 3111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Captain Planet
14:30 Mantis
15:00 Road to Avonlea
15:45 Concerning the Future
16:00 Families
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Film: "Growing Up"
20:50 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15 Urban Angle
22:00 News in English
22:25 Death of Aphrodite
23:30 New York Undercover
23:59 The Maid of Orleans (Act III)
00:45 Keeping Up Appearances

PRAYER TIMES

04:00 Fajr
05:33 Sunrise/Duha
12:45 Dhuhur
16:22 Asr
19:49 Maghrib
21:22 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefleh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 652765
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627240

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrace Church Tel. 622666

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 625843

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 715261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151

Armenian International Church Tel. 625256

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195

The Letter-Day Salute Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 673691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Cool weather conditions are expected to prevail with a chance of scattered showers in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom. Clouds are expected to appear at low altitudes with winds westerly moderate to active in Amman, winds will be northerly active and sea calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 14/27
Aqaba 22/35
Dera' 14/30

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Jordan Valley 19/34

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 26, Aqaba 26, Humidity readings: Amman 54 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Basim Qaddam 648633
Dr. Fakhr Tach 750908
Dr. Yousef Alon 649112
Dr. Yousef Al-Faqih 756688
Firas pharmacy 649112
Fondras pharmacy 773136
Al Asma pharmacy 637155
Nairukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636731
Yacoub pharmacy 649445
Shenouni pharmacy 637661
Nairukh pharmacy 623672
Nagh pharmacy 647632

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al-Omari 272032
Alqub pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al-Lawni 986601
Khalil pharmacy 985417

Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 109
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 846300
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 974467
Complaints 974467
Amman Municipality 623101
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akab Maternity, J. Amn 642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Muhana, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Specialist 664171/4
Shmouni Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667277/9
The Islamic, Abadi 666127/77
Al-Ahli, Abadi 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 773111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Qusba Al-Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Center for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)903323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)985732
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)900560
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909090

IRBID:
Prince Basma Hospital (03)273555
Greek Catholic Hospital (03)272775
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital (03)274100
AQAHA:
Prince Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

Flights (Terminal 1)

05:10 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:00 Beirut (RJ)
06:00 Amman (RJ)
06:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45 Brussels, (GF)
13:15 Paris (RJ)
13:15 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)
14:55 London (RJ)
14:55 Madrid (RJ)
15:00 Beirut, Larnaca (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:45 Doha (RJ)
16:45 Muscat, Dhah (RJ)
17:35 London (RJ)
17:45 Detroit (RJ)
17:50 Frankfurt (RJ)
18:40 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:00 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:30 Vienna (OS)
09:45 Cairo (MS)
13:40 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:00 Munich (YP)
14:00 Riyadh (SV)
16:20 Rome (AZ)
21:00 Aden (DY)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

Flights (Terminal 1)

06:05 Beirut (RJ)
06:00 Amman (RJ)
06:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45 Brussels, (GF)
13:15 Paris (RJ)
13:15 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)
14:55 London (RJ)
14:55 Madrid (RJ)
15:00 Beirut, Larnaca (RJ)
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17:45 Detroit (RJ)
17:50 Frankfurt (RJ)
18:40 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:00 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:30 Vienna (OS)
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13:40 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:00 Munich (YP)
14:00 Riyadh (SV)
16:20 Rome (AZ)
21:00 Aden (DY)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Apricot 600/400
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammur) 620
Cabbage 100/50
Carrot 300/200
Cauliflower 100/50
Cucumbers (large) 180/120
Cucumbers (small) 180/120
Eggplant 160/80
Garlic 650/450
Grapes 600/400
Lemon 300/200
Marrow (large) 200/120
Marrow (small) 230/180
Mushrooms 120/80
Okra 120/80
Onion (dry) 750/600
Peaches 170/100
Peanut 600/450
Pepper (hot) 280/200
Pepper (sweet) 200/120
Potato 350/300
String Bean 270/180
Sweet Melon 240/180
Tomato 100/50
Water Melon 90/40

5p

Al Faisa
win 9th
Jordan
Cup

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Faisa won their fourth Jordan Cup when they defeated Al Ramtha 4-0 in the final match of the competition held at Petra Stadium. Al Faisa Youth Club, who were the country's second most important soccer team, finished in the runner-up position for the past three years. However, the club's top striker, Jirve, completed a hat-trick in the second half while the second half while the goal to seal the win in the 16th minute.

Al Ramtha were the holders in 1990. The final round qualifiers were Al Hussein who clinched their first major title by winning the 1994 Faisa Cup. Al Hussein and Al Ramtha were the winners of the 1994 Faisa Cup.

Twenty eight teams entered the first division and the Jordan Cup. The surprising result was the elimination of Al Ramtha.

Jordan Cup winners up in brackets

1994 Faisa (I)
1993 Faisa (I)
1992 Faisa (I)
1991 Faisa (I)
1990 Faisa (I)
1989 Faisa (I)
1988 Faisa (I)
1987 Faisa (I)
1986 Faisa (I)
1985 Faisa (I)
1984 Faisa (I)
1983 Faisa (I)
1982 Faisa (I)
1981 Faisa (I)
1980 Faisa (I)

Tour de Indura to seize

SEKING, Belgium
Tour de France king Indura moved a step closer to an unprecedented consecutive tour triumph when he won Sunday's eighth stage, a 140 km time-trial, to the overall lead.

Looking effortless, stilling heat, the 34-year-old Belgian cyclist took the four hour time-trial to take the yellow jersey from Johan Bruyneel.

Indura had so far won with a brilliant Saturday's seventh stage, breaking a Bruyneel to take place and climb on to second overall. While not quite using as his previous

SEMI-VI FOR RI (ABDO) Large se living di (1st flo 3 bedro (2nd fic Nice v Tel: 86 NO AGE



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday chairs a meeting of liaison officers of Arab non-governmental organisations preparing to participate in the U.N. World Conference on women in Beijing (Petra photo)

Princess Basma advises coordinated efforts for world conference on women

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday urged Arab non-governmental organisations (NGO) taking part in the U.N. World Conference on Women in Beijing this September to adopt joint stands and pool their efforts in order to be an influential force at the international event.

Addressing a meeting of liaison officers representing non-governmental organisations in 10 Arab states, the Princess said that the Beijing conference is of great importance to Arab women, and it is vital that the NGOs representing women align their potential and make their voice heard at the world meeting.

Held only eight weeks before the Beijing conference, this meeting is of paramount importance since it would coordinate positions and draw up a joint strategy to be submitted to the conference, the Princess said. She called on participants to draw up the work of committees taking part in workshops stemming from the conference and said that it was important for Arab delegations to coordinate their work not only before but also during the conference itself.

Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, a member of the Jordanian delegation to the conference, addressed the audience outlining the purpose of the workshop.

Other speakers included head of U.N. agencies operating in Amman who said they were ready to back NGOs' efforts to serve women's objectives.

Later the Princess chaired the first session during which attention was drawn to the Jordanian document on women.

The meeting participants also reviewed a workshop in preparation for the Beijing conference which was held in Beirut last week.

The current three-day meeting is to prepare a draft plan for Arab organisations and to form teams to take part in the workshops of the World Conference on Women.

Jordan, Egypt sign accord to study feasibility of creating free trade zone

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Egypt Monday signed a trade protocol which provides for a feasibility study for the creation of a free trade zone between them.

A statement following the signing ceremony at the Ministry of Industry and Trade said that the free zone was essential in order to help the two countries cope with the requirements of new world developments in international economic and trade operations.

Under the terms of the protocol, which was signed by Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and his Egyptian counterpart, Mahmoud Mohammad Mahmoud, the two countries have two months to prepare the study for the free zone.

The study will then be submitted to technical committees in the two countries before the settlement of a final agreement to be referred to the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee for approval.

The protocol provides for preferential treatment in trade and economic cooperation between Egypt and Jordan, especially through the proposed free zone. The protocol also reaffirms the continuation of the former trade agreement between the two countries until it expires in October this year.

Upon signing the protocol, Mr. Abul Ragheb said that the accord constitutes one more step along the way for joint Arab action and, in particular, for economic integration between Jordan and Egypt.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said that bilateral relations between both countries were characterised by close cooperation and that progress was steadily being made in the interest of their peoples.

Egyptian and Jordanian ministers are co-chairing a three-day meeting of the Jordanian-Egyptian economic committee to discuss a wide range of topics on bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said discussions with Mr. Mahmoud revolved around the coordination of positions for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit, due to convene here in October, saying that further talks will take place to finalise the details in the next few weeks.

Mr. Mahmoud, who arrived here at the head of his team Sunday evening, described the protocol as the start of a new trend in closer economic cooperation between Cairo and Amman.

Strong relations between the two countries will serve as a good example to other Arab states, and the new protocol was certain to remove obstacles to free trade, the Egyptian minister said.

Following the signing of the protocol the two ministers called on Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, to brief him on the provisions of the accord.

Also Monday Mr. Mahmoud and his team called at the Amman Chamber of Industry where they met with its president Khalid Abu Hassan and discussed ways to bolster trade and economic ties between the private sectors of Egypt and Jordan.



Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and visiting Egyptian Minister of Trade Mahmoud Mohammad Mahmoud Monday sign a trade protocol (Petra photo)

Mr. Mahmoud said that the private sectors launch joint projects such as processing agricultural products, diversifying the national goods traded between the two countries, facilitating the passage of Jordanian trucks to Egyptian territories, reducing fees levied on vehicles carrying national products and speeding up the process of granting letters of credit for import-export operations.

Mr. Abu Hassan also demanded that Jordan and Egypt exempt exchanged products from at least two thirds of the customs duty normally levied on them and suggested that the two countries cancel protocols that provide for certain products to be exempted from customs duty on and instead

open the two markets for direct and free exchanges of goods.

Mr. Abu Hassan also urged Egypt to help end the sanctions on Iraq and the partial sanctions imposed on Libya and Sudan and called on Cairo to participate in the coming MENA economic summit due in October.

Noting that Egypt will participate actively in the summit, Mr. Mahmoud said that the Arab countries should seriously contemplate the idea of reviving the Arab Common Market.

entering a plea of innocence. Three witnesses, supported by bank account statements, testified in court on how an amount of \$4,500 transferred by Khalifa to an account in Jordan was spent on assigning Koranic teachers to the Soviet Union and the Philippines.

Khalifa opted to surrender himself to Jordanian authorities after he was arrested in the U.S. in mid-December on charges of falsifying his visa application.

He was entitled to a trial by a U.S. immigration court, but the Saudi, speaking through his lawyers, said he did not think he would get a fair trial in the U.S., particularly after anti-Arab sentiments were whipped up by the Oklahoma bombing in late April.

Security court sets date for ruling on 'Arab Afghans' case

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The State Security Court on Monday set July 19 for issuing its ruling on a case involving the so-called Arab Afghans after concluding a review of verdicts it issued in December.

In its 20-minute session on Monday, the three-member bench, presided over by Brigadier Hafez Amin, received a report from prison authorities concerning one of the 18 convicts in the case and announced the date for the ruling.

The prison report was sought by the court to establish the status of the convict, who was under 18 years of age when he was sentenced in the case.

The ruling on July 19 comes in line with an order from the Court of Cassation that the State Security Court review the Dec. 16 verdicts in the case, which stemmed from two bomb blasts and other attempted sabotage at public places in late 1993 and early 1994.

The explosions took place at cinema theatres showing pornographic movies. Also targeted in a foiled bomb attack was a store selling liquor.

The prosecution described the accused as Muslim zealots who wanted to eliminate "moral corruption" from the society.

Eighteen people were convicted of "conspiracy to commit terrorist attacks" and "illegal possession of weapons and explosives" in the case after a four-month trial; 11, including three in

absentia, were sentenced to death, and seven were given jail terms ranging from 7.5 years to 20 years at hard labour. Seven others were cleared of all charges.

The Court of Cassation, which made an automatic review of the case in line with new regulations adopted in 1992, asked that the State Security Court take into account the testimonies of three witnesses that the court had ignored while issuing the verdicts.

It also asked that the status of the minor convict also be established.

The State Security Court began the review in May and heard the three witnesses — one security officer and two civilians.

Parallel to the review of the verdicts, the court also

retried a Saudi national, Mohammad Khalifa, who was among the three sentenced in absentia.

Khalifa surrendered to the authorities in May and was entitled to a retrial under Jordanian laws that provide for a retrial for anyone who is sentenced in absentia if he or she surrenders to the authorities or is arrested.

The other two sentenced in absentia, a Jordanian and an Omani, remain fugitive.

Khalifa, who used to run a religious school in the Philippines, is accused of "conspiring to commit terrorist acts" on the basis of a statement by another defendant who said the Saudi had offered to "finance" a subversive group in Jordan.

In the Khalifa case, the court heard the defendant rejecting the charge and

Yemeni vocational training team arrives for talks on systems structure

AMMAN (Petra) — A Yemeni delegation led by Abdullah Jibari, head of the Vocational Training Establishment, arrived here Monday for a ten-day visit and discussion on cooperation in vocational training fields.

Accompanying Mr. Jibari are several Yemeni vocational training instructors who will attend training sessions at vocational training centres and meet with officials from the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) to discuss exchanges of expertise.

Mr. Jibari and his team will meet with VTC Director

General Ali Nasrallah to discuss vocational training programmes, the planning of training courses, studies related to promoting vocational training in Yemen and other relevant topics.

During the visit the team members will visit vocational training centres around the Kingdom to study their programmes and activities.

The team members will also take active part in two training courses for instructors.

One will involve the duties of the instructors, the structure of the vocational training system and guid-

ance to trainees.

The other will focus on vocational training systems in Jordan, determining the needs of vocational training, and the local labour markets and their needs for skilled labour.

They will also make field trips to various VTC centres.

A VTC statement said that the Yemeni team's visit was part of the framework of an agreement for mutual cooperation in vocational and technical training signed by Yemen and Jordan which provided for the holding of training courses for instructors.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SEMINAR

"The Arab Book — Problems and Horizon," (in Arabic) with the participation of Maher Kayali, Fathi Al Bis, and Ilias Farkouh at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 7:00 p.m.

NEWS

ABC News Highlights and the McNeil Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Paintings by Muhammad Bushnaq at Balqa Art Gallery in Fuheis.

Paintings by Adnan Yahyah at Darat Al Funun Jabal Weibdeh.

Paintings by Bernadette Gerges and Rita Gerges entitled "Lebanon Tomorrow," at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Paintings by Jordanian Artist Muhammad Majali at the Phoenix Gallery of Culture and Arts, Garden Street.

Works by Iraqi artist Tahija Hakim at Ab'ad Art Gallery.

Exhibition demonstrating the development of cinema over the past century at the French Cultural Centre.

Works by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Gallery.

RSCN seeks World Bank loan for Dana wildlife reserve

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) is seeking assistance from the World Bank to finance its projects for the conservation of Jordanian wildlife and nature reserves.

A society team led by Khaled Irani, head of the Wildlife Reserves department, left Amman for Washington, D.C. Monday saying that the team at securing a \$3 million loan for the society's Dana Wildlife Reserve near the southern

town of Tafleeh.

Mr. Irani was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that the three-day meeting with the World Bank will focus on the presentation of a general report about the progress of a three-year scheme for the development of the Dana reserve.

One-and-a-half years have elapsed since the start of the project, and the \$3 million are needed to finance the rest of the project in the next year and a half, said Mr.

Irani.

The report to the World Bank on Dana will also detail the activities of the Dana society which includes guiding the local community in the promotion of income-generating projects such as developing farming, organising tourism activities, extending aid to local residents in handicraft needs, said Mr. Irani.

The team will also discuss the society's plans for establishing more wildlife reserves in the Kingdom.

regulating the hunting of animals and birds according to an organised scheme, and introducing measures to safeguard several other natural resources, Mr. Irani said.

The Dana Wildlife Reserve was established on 250 square kilometres of land south of Tafleeh and aims at safeguarding the biological diversity of the area and involving the local residents in socio-economic activities, according to the RSCN.

Mr. Irani said that the RSCN is also in the process of creating a centre for training the local residents in handicrafts to be sold to tourists, and to house a museum and a laboratory for researchers conducting environmental studies. He said that according to plans, the society will also establish a tourism camp to house visitors to the reserve. The RSCN now runs six wildlife reserves: the Azraq, Shau-mari, Wadi Mujib, Zabla, Dana and Rum reserves.

Sudan denies Egyptian charge

Continued from page 12

groups a platform.

Relations between Cairo and Khartoum, already strained since Sudan's Islamic regime came to power in 1989, have plunged since Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak accused Sudan of masterminding a bid to kill him on June 26.

But Dr. Abdul Meguid said, Egypt and Sudan should first try to sort the issue out between themselves.

Mr. Meguid told reporters Sudanese Ambassador Ahmad Al Kordfani had come to see him and proposed the league show it was willing to help narrow the gap between Cairo and Khartoum.

"These subjects should first be treated at the bilateral level," added the secretary-general, who is Egyptian. The Egyptian government also says that mediation is not necessary, though it has pre-

viously rebuffed Sudanese attempts to arrange high-level meetings.

Mr. Musa told reporters that the Sudanese government had to show it had nothing to do with acts of violence in neighbouring states.

Mr. Musa said: "There is consensus that there is a link between the Sudanese government or Sudanese policy and signs of the use of violence in a number of countries. This must stop."

"Egypt hopes that the Sudanese government will take measures which can help us over the present crisis and that these measures will prove there is no link between the Sudanese government and these events, either in the past or from now on."

Asked about reports of the arrest of Egyptian engineers working for a building company in Khartoum, Mr. Musa said such steps should be avoided.

\$7.2m U. S. grant to improve tourist facilities, site communities

Amman (J.T.) — Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf Huneidi and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley W. Egan Monday signed an agreement granting Jordan an additional \$7.2 million for the five-year Cultural and Environmental Resources Management (CERM) Project, a U.S. Information Service (USIS) statement said.

Signed at the Ministry of Planning, the agreement brings the U.S. government's contribution to \$14.8 million out of a total of \$16 million, the statement said.

The first tranche of \$7.6 million was granted in September 1994.

The agreement was also

signed by William T. Oliver, Director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Jordan.

The CERM Project, which will be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and several non-governmental organisations, aims at helping to preserve specific cultural and archaeological sites in Jordan and at improving the services offered to visitors of these sites, according to the statement.

It will also ensure that the local communities at these sites benefit from the new economic opportunities that will be generated by the increased number of visitors, the statement added.



Rima Khalaf Huneidi

The first phase of the project will benefit the sites of Petra, the Amman Citadel and Madaba. Other sites will be developed during the second phase of the project, the statement said.

Burma opposition leader freed

RANGOON (AP) — Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi was freed from House Arrest Monday, days before completing her sixth years of detention, official sources said.

Col. Kyaw Win, the deputy intelligence chief, went to Mrs. Suu Kyi's lake-side residence on University Avenue at 4 p.m. (0730 GMT) and told her of the military government's decision to lift the restriction order without preconditions, a source said.

"At her request, guards are still kept at her house but she is an ordinary citizen," said the source, who demanded anonymity.

The United States, the European Union and other Western governments have continually demanded the release of Mrs. Suu Kyi, winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent struggles for democracy in Burma.

The Burmese government has eased up in recent years and made efforts to break its international isolation, but Mrs. Suu Kyi's release surprised many foreign analysts.

They said the authorities appeared to be solidifying their control over the country and, if freed, Mrs. Suu Kyi could only stir trouble since she has remained steadfastly committed to her cause even in detention.

Just last week, the junta had indicated it did not plan to release Mrs. Suu Kyi when she completed her sentence on July 19.

"The rights of 45 million people in the country are more important than the



Aung San Suu Kyi

rights of an individual," Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt said in an apparent reference to Mrs. Suu Kyi.

This impoverished South East Asian nation of 45 million people has been ruled by Socialist and military autocrats for decades, and has been torn not only by pro-democratic dissent but also armed ethnic minority guerrilla groups seeking greater autonomy. Amnesty International and other human rights group often have accused the current government of widespread human rights abuses.

Mrs. Suu Kyi, 50, led the National League for Democracy (NLD), which won a landslide victory in general elections in 1990 but was not allowed by the military to

rule. She had challenged the military after soldiers fatally shot hundreds of people to quell a 1988 mass uprising against autocratic rule. She advocated non-violent resistance, invoking the name of India's Mahatma Gandhi and her own father, Burmese independence leader Aung San.

The military junta put her under house arrest on July 20, 1989, under a security law for allegedly inciting unrest. Her detention was extended every 180 days under the law.

With the lifting of the restriction order, Mrs. Suu Kyi is allowed to go anywhere and meet anyone just like an ordinary citizen as long as she does not violate any laws, the sources said Monday.

No one apart from Mrs. Suu Kyi's immediate family had been allowed to visit her until U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson did so in February 1994. In another softening of its stand, government leaders met with Mrs. Suu Kyi for political dialogue at least twice, starting last September. Details of the talks have not been disclosed.

The government had said she could walk free anytime as long as she left the country, but she refused. The government said it would not cede power to a civilian administration until completion of the drafting of a new constitution but would not give a timetable.

In a statement which her husband, British academic Michael Aris, took out in January, Mrs. Suu Kyi said she would never cut a secret deal for her release.

She wrote: "I adhere to the principle of accountability and consider myself at all times bound by the democratic duty... to be guided by the aspirations of those engaged in the movement to establish a truly democratic political system in Burma."

Mr. Aris, a professor at Oxford University, and their two sons live in England.

Burma's military rulers have suppressed virtually all outward dissent, but even isolated from the outside world, Mrs. Suu Kyi remained the symbol heart of the pro-democracy movement.

In Burma, she was mentioned in reverential whispers as "the lady."



Cuban President Fidel Castro holds his vote as he leaves a voting booth at a local voting station before casting his vote in Havana during the country municipal elections. Cuban authorities expect that 97 per cent of the some 7.5 million Cubans registered to vote will go to the polls to elect 11,292 municipal delegates (AFP photo)

Castro sees recovery as Cubans vote in local government elections

HAVANA (R) — Cuban President Fidel Castro, voting in local government elections Sunday, said Cuba is recovering from the recession that has gripped it since the collapse of its major trading partner, the former Soviet Union.

"The spirit (of the nation) is better this year," Mr. Castro said after casting his vote in Havana's Vedado district.

"A certain recovery is beginning, within the limits of what is possible," he said, though he acknowledged conditions on the Communist-ruled Caribbean island remained difficult.

Cuba has been trying to haul its sugar-exporting, oil importing economy out of a five-year slump that followed the 1991 break-up of the former Soviet Union, a major importer of Cuban raw sugar and supplier of fuel and fertilisers.

The country has had its lowest sugar harvest in more than 50 years, but Cuban officials point to increased food and nickel production and improvements in other goods and services as signs that the economy is recovering.

Mr. Castro voted Sunday in nationwide municipal elections, which the authorities

said would strengthen the island's one-party Communist system against external threats.

More than seven million voters were registered for the polls, which were to elect 14,229 delegates to sit on 164 municipal assemblies.

Sunday's fine weather favoured a high turnout and early returns appeared to support official predictions that more than 90 per cent of the electorate would cast their votes.

Mr. Castro reaffirmed his own well-known distaste for Western-style multi-party, free-market democracy, which he described as "the democracy of the rich."

"The consumer society is not the formula... the democracy of capitalism is not the formula," he said.

The Municipal Assemblies of People's Power, whose members were elected Sunday, are the lowest tier of Cuba's single-party system, in which the ruling Communist Party is the only legally recognised political party.

Voting is not obligatory, but Cuban leaders and the state media have presented it as a patriotic duty, particularly at a time when Cuba faces moves in the U.S. Congress

to tighten a 33-year U.S. trade embargo against the island.

National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon criticised the embargo-tightening moves, sponsored by U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, and Indiana Republican Congressman Dan Burton.

"This will be the clearest, strongest and firmest way for U.S. Cubans to tell Messrs. Burton and Helms and everyone else that here in Cuba it is we who decide, we who elect and we who create our own laws and nobody else," Mr. Alarcon said.

Mr. Castro said Sunday that Cuba's growing contact with capitalism had boosted both bribery and corruption.

Mr. Castro said that in 30 years of trade with the former Soviet Bloc he could not remember a single case of bribery.

"But through our contact with capitalism, many of these kind of phenomena are beginning to appear," he told reporters.

"There are many people who try... to bribe, to corrupt, all that kind of thing," Mr. Castro continued. These were "attitudes that clash with the spirit of the revolution and morality."

Third-century shipwreck found off Croatia

ZAGREB (AFP) — Croatian archaeologists have discovered the remains of a Mauritanian vessel which was shipwrecked off the Croatian island of Hvar as long ago as the third century, the daily Vecernji List reported Sunday. The vessel, submerged in around 25 metres of water in a bay on the north of the island off the Croatian port of Split, was first discovered by fishermen several months ago. It is believed to be one of the few underwater archaeological sites near Croatia which has not been plundered by vandals.

Marinko Petric, the official in charge of the recovery, said the shipwrecked vessel was carrying some 80 amphoras as well as ceramic and mosaic pieces which probably decorated the ship's galley.

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Teenage Sri Lankan plucks nuts in the raw

COLOMBO (R) — An 18-year-old Sri Lankan coconut plucker has refused to wear a stitch of clothing since the day he was born. The island newspaper said Saturday. R.M. Prematilaka, from the village of Madagana, 90 miles (145 km) east of Colombo, no sooner tries to cover up and his whole body starts to itch, the newspaper said, but his allergy has not stopped him plucking nuts.

Prematilaka, who continues to live in the raw, is an expert in plucking coconuts and arcanuts (betel nuts) and has also cultivated a farm," the newspaper said. His mother refused to allow photographs to be taken of her son.

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His mother refused to allow photographs to be taken of her son.

Moose on the loose steals boy's swingset

ALINGSÅS, Sweden (AFP) — Little Rasmus Nilsson of Sweden woke up one day last week to find his swingset missing from the backyard, stolen not by a thief, but by a moose, the daily Alingsås Tidning said. Police in this small town in southwestern Sweden at first suspected a cruel thief had stolen the boy's swingset. But then they noticed a trail of large hoof prints showing where the 50-kilogramme (110-pound) iron construction had been dragged away, the paper said. The moose, obviously searching for goodies in the family garden, had gotten tangled in the swingset's nylon wires and wrestled itself in a stream 800 metres away, where the mangled bars were found.

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Gales kill 300 egrets in China

BEIJING (R) — Gales and rainstorms have killed more than 300 egrets in China's eastern Shandong province and destroyed thousands of year-old cypresses, Xinhua News Agency said Saturday. No human casualties were reported. More than 300 egrets were killed when gales and rainstorms ripped through cypresses at the famous Confucius temple in Qufu Saturday, Xinhua said. Eighteen trees were destroyed, it said. Twenty-two others were damaged.

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New Tongan island destined to sink quickly

AUCKLAND (AFP) — Naming the latest Pacific island might be a waste of time as it is likely to disappear within a couple of years — just as it has done at least six times this century, New Zealand geologist Brad Johnson believes. The island burst out of the Meis Shoal near the Vava'u Group of islands in Tonga, 2,600 kilometres (1,612 miles) northeast of here, on June 6. As it coincided with the Rugby World Cup there were calls to name it after All Black winger sensation Jonah Lomu who was born in Tonga, but he may be too late as the "island" has already been named several times. Indeed Mr. Johnson believes it is the same island that in 1976 was named by King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV as Latefi Island. Two years after it was named, it disappeared. Earlier this month a Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) Orion flew over the reincarnated island and estimated it was about 84,000 square metres (903,000 square feet) and, after initially rising to 54 metres (178 feet) above sea level, has now slipped back to 45 metres (148 feet). "Part of the lava dome has collapsed," Mr. Johnson said.

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'Mao allowed Dalai Lama to flee Tibet

BEIJING (R) — Chairman Mao Tse-tung secretly opened the way for the dramatic mountain escape to India by Tibet's god-king, the Dalai Lama, after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1959, a newspaper said Monday.

The newspaper said the late Chinese leader to allow the Dalai Lama to flee was an historic secret that could only now be revealed, more than 35 years later, the official China Youth Daily said.

Chinese soldiers had the Tibetan leader and his retinue in their gun sights when he crossed a river during his night escape from the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, but did not open fire because they had no orders to stop him, the newspaper said.

Mao told Communist

cadres and soldiers in Tibet they were forbidden to stop the Dalai Lama or his followers, even if they tried to leave the country during the abortive uprising in March, 1959, it said.

Mao's decision was a tactical move to divide Tibet's traditional upper-class rulers and to identify those who would support Beijing, the newspaper said.

An official of the Tibetan government said by telephone from Lhasa he was unable to comment since the region's current leaders were all too young to know enough about the uprising.

The Dalai Lama and tens of thousands of Tibetans fled to India during and after the armed uprising that followed almost nine years of Chinese military occupation of Tibet

and was crushed with heavy loss of life.

Since his hurried escape on horseback and on foot across some of the world's highest mountains, the Dalai Lama has lived in exile in India from where he has waged an international campaign for Tibetan political autonomy.

Beijing, which has worked to isolate the Dalai Lama diplomatically, has become embroiled in a dispute with him over the selection of a successor to the late Panchen Lama, Tibet's second-most senior religious and political leader.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize-winner, is widely revered in Tibet, where Chinese control has been repeatedly challenged by demonstrations aimed at restoring independence.

Gingrich calls for diplomatic ties with Taiwan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States should establish diplomatic ties with Taiwan, "regardless of what happens" to its relations with China, one of America's most powerful politicians says.

The United States should "get it over with" and recognise Taiwan because "every time we do anything minor on behalf of Taiwan, it leads to a big blowup with China and they overreact," Rep. Newt Gingrich, speaker of the House of Representatives, said on American television.

"I think we are better off to get that behind us," he said Sunday.

The Beijing government contends that it is the only true representative of the Chinese people and has severed ties with several Latin American and African countries that, after receiving aid from Taiwan, recognised the Taipei government.

The sensitivity of the Beijing leaders was apparent recently when they strongly protested the Clinton administration's decision to allow Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui to make a private visit to the United States.

Commenting on CBS Face The Nation news interview show, the Republican from Georgia said Washington should "move to recognise Taiwan as a free country" and "tell the Chinese they would have to live with the reality that the people of Taiwan are a free people."

Hosokawa 'is ready' for comeback

TOKYO (AP) — Former Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa ended a year of public reticence Monday and acknowledged he has given thought to trying to win his old job back.

The comeback announcement marked the return of the Hosokawa of old — the sharp-tongued foe of politics-as-usual — instead of the wavering leader that Japan got to know during his tempestuous eight-month administration.

In August 1993, Mr. Hosokawa led a coalition that ended the 38-year dominance of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party. He achieved a few key reforms, including an overhaul of Japan's election system, but resigned in April 1994 with his ruling coalition in disarray.

Since stepping down, Mr. Hosokawa has stayed on the sidelines, letting suspicions about his personal finances — a factor in his resignation — slip out of the limelight in the absence of decisive evidence.

In his appearance Monday at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, Mr. Hosokawa had little to say about his resignation but plenty of harsh words for the current government, dominated again by the Liberal Democrats.

The gist of Mr. Hosokawa's message was virtually the same as it was three years ago when he first stepped on to the national stage by forming the reformist Japan New Party.

Bureaucrats, he said, are stifling the economy with over-regulation, while politicians are only interested in raking in special-interest money.

"It's as if the East German minister has taken over even though the Berlin Wall has fallen," he said. "We need to destroy the wall again."

Mr. Hosokawa pitched himself as the political best qualified to handle American demands for change in Japan, saying that if he had been prime minister during the recent auto trade dispute he would have forced bureaucrats to repeal red tape that shuts out U.S. auto parts.

Mr. Hosokawa, 57, is a member of the leading

opposition New Frontier Party but he showed little enthusiasm for his allies.

Referring to the campaign for July 23 elections to parliament's upper house, Mr. Hosokawa said: "Both the ruling and opposition parties are wearing headbands and white gloves, going around with their loudspeaker cars — all of Japan's most unhip things."

"Politicians need to take note that people are fed up with that kind of thing," he said.

He said he wanted to form an "alliance for a new deal" of 30 to 50 reformist legislators within the New Frontier Party, and called on Japanese to select a leader "who understands the age."

Asked whether he himself had any interest in the prime ministership, Mr. Hosokawa did his best to look embarrassed by the question, smiling shyly and turning red.

He mumbled that he doesn't think about the subject "very much" but added that he had no way of guessing what his future might hold.

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Vietnamese-Americans stage White House protest over U.S. ties

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Vietnamese-Americans pounded the pavement in front of the White House Sunday protesting the expected normalisation of U.S. relations with Hanoi.

The demonstration topped off a weekend of heated debate on the issue here which promised to spill over into Congress this week as senators and representatives split on the issue.

About 100 protesters ranging from old men to young girls carried candles and shouted across Pennsylvania Avenue towards the presidential mansion — "Human rights for Vietnam. Yes! Yes! Yes!" "It is time to normalise with Hanoi! No! No! No!"

The group was reacting to news reports that President Bill Clinton was expected to announce the normalisation of relations with the Communist regime in Vietnam some time this week.

"Vietnam is a country of emerging importance in South East Asia, certainly an important country economically for the United States and other countries," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Friday.

The announcement, which would come shortly after the 20th anniversary of the fall of South Vietnam, would follow the U.S. administration's lifting of its economic embargo on Vietnam in February 1994.

Arizona Republican Senator John McCain, a former U.S. Navy pilot who spent five and a half years as a prisoner in North Vietnam, came out in favour of normalisation Sunday.

"We need a strong Vietnam in the region as a counterweight to what is a disturbing pattern of behaviour on the part of the Chinese," he said during a televised interview.

But California Republican Representative Duncan Hunter said he would propose a resolution in Congress saying Mr. Clinton "should not recognise Vietnam or deliver any of the benefits that attend that recognition," he told CNN television.

Mr. Hunter said recognition should be withheld "until the North Vietnamese give us total access to all of their prison records and to travel and inspection of all areas of Vietnam, including all of their prisons."

Ouyen Le, executive president of the Vietnamese Community of Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia and leader of the protest, spoke out against normalisation on three grounds.

The first was the fate of U.S. prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action which "have not been properly accounted for," he said.

Scientists urge U.S. to dispose of plutonium

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. scientists called on their government Monday to start work now to dispose of plutonium from dismantled nuclear weapons, saying storing it indefinitely would pose security risks and send the wrong political signal.

In a report requested by the Clinton administration, a panel from the private National Academy of Sciences (NAS) proposed that two different ways of rendering the highly toxic substance less dangerous should be developed at the same time.

The two options chosen by the seven-member panel were to use the plutonium as fuel to generate electricity in existing nuclear power stations, and to embed it in glass logs along with other radioactive waste.

The United States and Russia each expect to be faced by about 50 metric tonnes of plutonium from at least 20,000 warheads being eliminated under strategic arms agreements they have

signed in the last four years. The plutonium is currently being stored at heavily guarded dismantlement sites near Amarillo, Texas, and at several places in Russia.

The NAS report said that keeping it there indefinitely would lead to "substantial risks" such as being diverted into new weapons by the possessor state or stolen by others.

It would also send "negative political signals for non-proliferation and arms reduction, suggesting that the current arms reductions could be reversed at any time," said the panel led by Berkeley energy Professor John Holdren.

Much of the 418-page report, Management And Disposition Of Excess Weapons Plutonium, analysed ways of dealing with the metal, a key fissile ingredient of nuclear bombs.

The report concluded that by combining weapons-grade plutonium with uranium in so-called mixed oxide fuel, it

could be used to generate power at virtually any of the 109 operating light-water reactors in the United States. The residue from a single usage would be no more dangerous than other spent fuel.

It said another option was to encase the plutonium in glass, a process known as vitrification that is currently being developed to deal with other defence wastes. The logs would ultimately be buried underground.

Both processes would take 20-30 years to dispose of 50 metric tonnes of plutonium, and cost between \$500 million and \$5 billion depending on the technologies chosen, the report said.

The panel said both processes might be necessary.

"Since it is crucial that at least one of these options succeed, since time is of the essence, and since the costs of pursuing both in parallel are modest in relation to the security stakes, we recommend that project-oriented

activities be initiated on both options, in parallel, at once," it said.

It said the Department of Energy should assign resources to both options, seek out suitable reactors, talk to nuclear plant owners and examine technical problems in vitrification.

The report rejected other options, such as running the plut



A resident of Wei Dihu town of Hunan province routs a boat carrying his belongings after heavy flooding. The town with a population of 20,000 has seen more than two hundreds people die due to flooding. Destruction caused by the flood

in Southern China is estimated at more than \$4 billion, affecting 100 million people and leaving 1,179 dead (AFP photo)

Flooding causes havoc on rail lines in China

BEIJING (Agencies) — Severe flooding in south China has interrupted train service for up to 14 days and delayed train transport for a total of more than 1,000 hours, the official press reported Monday.

Nearly 1,200 people have already died in heavy flooding that has hit 10 southern provinces. But government officials in most of the 10 provinces said Monday that rains had stopped or slowed and that flood waters were under control or receding.

The Civil Affairs Ministry's Disaster Relief Department said Monday that it had no new figures to update Friday's death toll of 1,179. Flooding has submerged railroad tracks, caused landslides and washed away track beds in 110 places in the six provinces that are under the administration of the Shanghai Railway Bureau, Shanghai papers reported.

40 of those places, delaying service for a total of 1,002 hours.

Service has not been restored in two places. A bridge across the Yangtze River, China's longest, was closed June 26 when water levels exceeded the danger zone. On July 1, the railway closed the Xiangjiu line near the city of Jinjiang, Jiangxi province, when water in the Bali Lake threatened to spill over dikes. Railway workers were mobilised to build dikes along the tracks to protect them from flood waters, the reports said.

Summer flooding hits southern China every year, but unusually heavy rains this year have caused water levels to rise in nearly all rivers and lakes.

The Yangtze River swelled to levels not seen in more than 45 years along many towns in central Hubei and neighbouring Anhui province.

Taiwan used devastating floods in China to try to repair strained relations Monday, offering its condolences and calling for relief funds for its Communist arch-rival.

Two private organisations have donated some \$400,000 in medicine and other relief for a flood which has killed nearly 1,200 people and injured more than 26,000 in 10 Chinese provinces.

Relations were badly strained in June by protests from Beijing, which tries to isolate Taiwan diplomatically, over a private visit to the United States by Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui.

China postponed high-level talks and a series of lower-level exchanges after Mr. Lee's visit, the first by a serving Taiwan president to the United States, which had excluded such visits as a matter of policy.

It's attempt to repair relations, Taiwan used its straits exchange Foundation (SEF), an organisation styled as unofficial but which in fact speaks with the government's voice, to stress deep concern over the floods in China.

Sri Lankan war escalates as rebels offer stiff resistance

COLOMBO (AFP) — Fierce battles, sometimes hand-to-hand, erupted in northern Sri Lanka Monday as Tamil rebels offered stiff resistance to a major military advance, military officials here said.

Six soldiers were killed and 71 wounded in the military's biggest campaign ever in the Jaffna peninsula, where the rebels maintain a de facto separate state, officials said.

"The terrorists are coming towards us. Our objective is to kill as many as possible. We are asking civilians to return to liberated areas in the next few days," spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said. He discounted claims by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam that 150 civilians had been killed, 250 wounded and another 300,000 displaced as a result of the heavy fighting concentrated on the southwestern flank of the Palaly military complex.

"There are no civilians in the areas where the fighting is taking place because they had enough time to get out of the firing line. But we are asking civilians to return in about two days," Mr. Munasinghe said.

He said the government was gearing for a major provision of food, medicine and electricity to those who return to the areas wrested from the control of the rebels.

As heavy fighting flared, an air force helicopter was shot and crippled by the rebels, forcing the pilot to make an emergency landing in military-held territory. The helicopter, the second to be hit in as many days, toppled on landing, wounding one officer and a gunner.

Mr. Munasinghe said aircraft bombed at least three targets in support of ground troops conducting the "Leap Forward" Operation, which involves some 10,000 soldiers, the navy and the air force.

Clandestine Voice of Tigers Monday said airforce planes dropped nine bombs on a church at Navaly, killing 65 people and wounding over 100 others. Mr. Munasinghe said he was unaware of it.

The Tiger radio said a hospital had been hit and damaged at Manippay. It also said that 70 bodies of civilians had been taken to the main Jaffna Hospital, which is run under the protection of the International Red Cross.

For the first time in eight years, the Sri Lankan security forces retook a strategic causeway linking the peninsula and a naval base located on the small islet of Karainagar to the west of Jaffna, the symbol of Tamil separatism. The protracted Tamil separatist campaign to establish a separate nation in the island's north has claimed over 50,000 lives in the past 23 years.

With the violence escalating in the island's north, armed forces and the police tightened security in the capital Colombo, where three bombs went off overnight without causing any

casualties. Tamil Tigers also attacked a police post in the island's northcentral region Monday, killing five people and wounding two others, the military said.

The military offensive came after a series of reversals suffered by the military since the rebels pulled out of peace talks with the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga on April 19.

Since then, the rebels have killed 500 government troops, according to military figures. The military also claims killing an equal number of rebels but the guerrillas say the figure is much lower.

Meanwhile, most of the 16 people killed and dumped in a lake outside the Sri Lankan capital last month were believed to be minority Tamils, police officials here said Monday.

Four of the 16 bodies found so far have been identified as Tamils including that of one youth, Naresh Rajadurai, who was employed at a video-lending store in Wellawatte, a predominantly

Tamil area in the capital, police said.

"We believe all the bodies are that of Tamils. Investigations are continuing. We would like relatives of persons who are missing to help us identify the others," a police officer said.

Police fished out 11 bodies from the Bolgoda Lake outside the capital and found another five under a roadside culvert in northwest Alawwa prompting President Kumaratunga to order a probe into the killings.

The victims had been murdered and most men had their hands tied, police said. Police said they did not rule out the possibility of the victims being linked to fighting in the northeast between security forces and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The LTTE in a statement last week claimed that 30 bodies of youths from the minority Tamil community had been found by June 14 and said that Tamil parents were "distracted over the sudden disappearance of youths."



Sri Lankan security forces search a park in the area following a bomb blast in the area. They were no casualties in the explosion. A second explosion occurred later in the capital, again with no casualties. Both blasts came a

day after Tamil rebels warned they would bomb Colombo if the government failed to probe alleged human rights abuses by the military (AFP photo)

U.S. diplomat meets detained Chinese-American

BEIJING (R) — Three weeks after being detained by China and cut off from the outside world, Chinese-American human rights activist Harry Wu, who faces espionage charges, finally met a U.S. diplomat Monday.

U.S. Consul-General Arturo Macias met Mr. Wu in detention in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, a U.S. embassy spokeswoman said.

"This is the meeting we've been seeking. This meeting has taken place... It is a step forward," she said. She declined to provide details. Xinhua News Agency said the visit was "arranged at the request of the U.S. embassy in Beijing in accordance with the Sino-U.S. consular agreement," which agrees on consular access within 48 hours.

China formally arrested Mr. Wu Saturday on charges of espionage. Stealing state secrets and trying to enter the country under an assumed name. He faces a maximum penalty of death.

"He has violated Chinese law and committed crimes," Xinhua said.

Mr. Wu, born in China but now a U.S. citizen, was detained on June 19 after entering China from Kazakhstan. The 58-year-old activist, who spent 19 years in Chinese labour camps for dissident activities, apparently recently incurred fresh Chinese wrath for writing extensively about China's secretive prison system and alleged human-rights abuses

inside prisons. He has publicised allegations that China sells organs from executed prisoners. Beijing denies the allegation.

China has rejected demands by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate for Mr. Wu's immediate release.

The U.S. State Department maintains Mr. Wu's innocence and says his detention will damage U.S.-China relations, already tense over trade policy, human-rights and security issues.

Hui to the United States, in June.

Last month, the United States accused China of violating an internationally recognised consular convention by refusing to let U.S. diplomats contact Mr. Wu.

Beijing insisted it has abided strictly to the consular accord but says Washington has repeatedly violated it.

Apparently underscoring China's insistence it had not violated the accord, Xinhua said: "The relevant Chinese department informed the U.S. embassy in Beijing of Mr. Wu's arrest immediately afterwards."

Breakthrough announced in Chechnya peace talks

GROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Chechen and Russian negotiators broke through Monday on the thorniest issue at peace talks in Grozny — the status of Chechnya.

There was no final accord but the two sides said in a joint communiqué that they had agreed "on the approach to the key problem, including Chechnya's status."

The success came however against a backdrop of tension on the streets and the discovery of a man's rotting head in a Grozny suburb, where a Chechen family was massacred three days ago.

Nikolai Semenyov, the administrator from Moscow for Chechnya, said that about 100 Chechen families have been forced to flee the southern Russian region of Stavropol, where Chechen guerrillas launched a massive raid in mid-June to force the start of the current peace negotiations.

The joint statement said the Chechen independence government negotiators and the Russian authorities trying to end the seven-month war had "advanced on the political block of questions."

No details were given and the talks, mediated by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), were to continue Tuesday. An OSCE source called Monday's session "the breakthrough."

The Chechens appeared to have accepted a Russian proposal to postpone the long-term decision on Chechnya's future until free

and "fair general elections have been held."

A presidential poll will give the people a clear choice to state whether they want to remain part of Russia or breakaway, said one of the Russian negotiators, Arkady Volsky.

However, the Chechens are pressing for their government, which declared independence in 1991 and led the war against the Russian army starting in December, to have some official recognition from Moscow.

"After the elections — that's for the future status. We're talking about real status today," Chechen delegation head Usman Imaev told reporters at the end of the session.

Mr. Imaev showed another sign of compromise on arrival at the talks, saying that he was prepared to discuss future forms of government with Salmaybek Khadzhev, the Russian-installed interim leader in Chechnya, who is hated by the Dudayev forces.

"These are also our people," Mr. Imaev said. Security remained unusually tight around the OSCE, with the posting of helmeted special forces with anti-tank rockets alongside the Chechen guerrilla guards in Muslim green headbands.

After the talks ended, Mr. Imaev and Chechen military commander Aslan Maskhadov addressed a crowd of about 150 Chechens held back from the OSCE house by a line of Russian soldiers and

armoured personnel carriers for the second day running.

The crowd, who had been waiting in the scorching sun all day, responded ecstatically, crying "Chechen Republic" and "Allahu Akbar," as the Russian troops, bristling with machineguns and automatic rifles, looked on.

Meanwhile, residents in the Grozny suburb of Prigorodny found the head of a decapitated man under a tree in the street where a Chechen family was massacred last Friday.

Residents said they had no idea whom the head, of a middle-aged man with an upper-row of gold teeth and thick brown hair, might have belonged to. It was green from decomposition and swarmed with flies.

The peace talks collapsed Friday after the massacre of six people, including three children, in Prigorodny. A seventh victim, a woman in her 30s, was mortally wounded by a bullet in the head but was still being kept alive in hospital Monday.

Witnesses said they saw masked gunmen arrive in a Russian armoured vehicle. The killings, which are under investigation, caused a wave of anti-Russian anger in Grozny, which was captured after being largely destroyed by bombardments in February.

There was no indication that the head was of a Prigorodny resident and may have belonged to a headless body reportedly found in central

Grozny two days ago.

But the message in the terrified village was unmistakable. "We clearly see that this is a threat, after the killings, that if we talk we'll get the same thing," said Sharami Yakhiyev, 39, a close friend of the family that was killed.

"It is a threat to scare us," he said, pointing at the head. "We hadn't even had time to get over those killings and now they throw a head down here," said Yakha Khadamova, 42, bursting into tears.

The incident came as Russian authorities declared four soldiers accused of the murders of two other Chechens, in northern Grozny on Friday, innocent.

Meanwhile, Russia's Constitutional Court Monday began a review of President Yeltsin's order to send troops power to the defence minister came to light.

The Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament, raised the case, arguing that the president should have asked its approval before pouring troops into Chechnya on Dec. 11, 1994, to oppose an independence bid by forces loyal to Dzhokhar Dudayev.

The council Monday revealed that a secret presidential decree gave Defence Minister Pavel Grachev sweeping powers to end the Chechnya crisis from No. 30.

Tourist bus crash kills 22 in France

AVIGNON, France (AP) — A Spanish tour bus filled with college vacationers struck a truck and overturned in southern France before dawn Monday, killing 22 on board and injuring 32 others, police said.

The crash occurred on the A9 Highway near Avignon at 1:30 a.m. (2330 GMT Sunday) when the driver dozed off and the bus hit the truck, said police.

The driver lost control of the bus, which struck the centre divider and overturned, said police, who held the driver for questioning.

Of the 59 on board the bus, 22 were killed and 32 injured, 10 seriously. Only the driver and four young passengers

escaped unscathed, police said on anonymity.

The four passengers were taken to an emergency rescue station and given breakfast and beds Monday morning.

"I was sitting on the right and I fell on the passengers on the left when the bus fell over. There was a woman losing a lot of blood. I spoke with her, and then she died. Another woman had her arm amputated," said 26-year-old Isabel Gil, who was unhurt.

"I have a lot of friends who are dead," Ms. Gil said.

Ms. Gil is a psychology student from the University of Barcelona. She and 19 classmates were on their way back from a five-day trip to Amsterdam to celebrate the

end of the school year.

Most of the passengers were Spanish, but others were Dutch, Belgian and French, police said.

Benjamin Gobert, a 17-year-old Frenchman, was on his way with three other family members to visit relatives in the south. "My brother and my cousin have been taken to the hospital," he told reporters.

Emergency rescue and fire Brigade Commander Bernard Imbert was one of the first to arrive on the scene.

"It was atrocious. The bus had pulverised dozens of metres of the safety divider. At the moment of impact, three people were struck under the bus. We found

them when we raised the vehicle. Others were ejected. Both lanes of the highway were littered with human debris and luggage," Commander Imbert said.

Four people were killed in another pre-dawn crash Monday between a Slovak bus and a truck near Trousseau in eastern France, police said.

Twenty-five others on the bus were injured, five seriously. An initial investigation indicated that the bus driver attempted a U-turn on a four-lane highway. The truck, loaded with 20 tons of paper, was unable to avoid the bus.

The two drivers on the bus, the truck driver and a young passenger on the bus were among the dead, police said.

Controversial Indian film director hurt by bomb

MADRAS (R) — The director of a controversial Indian film angrily denounced by Muslim fundamentalists was hurt in a bomb attack Monday in the southern city of Madras, a doctor said.

Dr. K.R. Sridharan said director Mani Ratnam, whose film Bombay was banned briefly to placate angry Muslims, was attacked with three crude bombs as he read a newspaper at home.

His assailants escaped in a scooter taxi.

"He has got multiple pellet injuries but he is not serious," Sridharan said. Mr. Ratnam would stay in hospital for a day, he added.

Mr. Ratnam's maid also sustained similar injuries, he said.

could be linked to the film, which depicts the love story of a Muslim girl with a Hindu boy and their attitude to communal violence that engulfed Bombay in 1993.

Mr. Ratnam also made a highly successful movie linked to India's Kashmir separatist problem, called "Roja" (the rose). Both were made in Tamil and dubbed in Hindi.

Meanwhile, Western tourists with no chance of rescue by Indian soldiers remained Monday in the hands of Kashmir separatist guerrillas demanding the release of 20 imprisoned comrades.

Government sources ruled out rescue operations by Indian troops to free two Britons, an American and a German for fear hostages might be

harmful.

The militants, from the previously unknown Al Faran group, are demanding the government release 20 guerrilla leaders detained during the five-year separatist insurgency in India's only Muslim-majority state, Jammu and Kashmir.

"If our demands are not met by the government before July 15, the government will be responsible for all consequences," a statement from the group, written in Urdu and received by local media on Sunday, said.

Forty insurgents from Al Faran kidnapped two Britons and two Americans while they were on a trekking holiday near Pahalgam, 90 kilometres east of Srinagar last Tuesday.

The guerrillas released three women and a man in the group, as well as their two guides.

One of the kidnap victims, John Donald Childs from the United States, escaped from his captors Saturday.

A fifth western tourist, Dirk Hasert from Germany, was abducted in the mountains 25 kilometres from Pahalgam Saturday. It was not known whether the two abductions were carried out by the same group.

Childs, the American who escaped, was spotted on a ridge in the rugged Himalayan valley fifteen hours after he escaped. He was spotted from a helicopter-carrying Lieutenant-General D.D. Saklani, security adviser to the state governor.

Death toll passes 200 in S. Korea store collapse

SEOUL (AFP) — The official death toll in the Seoul department store collapse shot up to 203 Monday, Yonhap Television News said.

The number missing in the tragedy still stood at well over 200, meaning that the final death toll was expected to exceed 400.

More than 900 were injured in the June 29 collapse of the five-storey Sampoong store.

Heavy equipment was fast reaching the collapsed basement levels of the five-storey structure where the stench of decomposing bodies was overpowering, witnesses said.

Television stations, meanwhile, showed a quietly emotional reunion between 21-year-old student, Choi Myung-Suk, rescued Sunday after 10 days entombed in an

air pocket deep in the rubble, and the girlfriend he thought had died in the collapse.

The girl, a fellow shop assistant injured in the collapse, was shown sitting clasping Choi's hand as he started taking his first food, a little rice, in suburban St. Mary's hospital.

"Her face came into my mind many times (during the ten days underground)," Mr. Choi told reporters Monday. Doctors said he was improving rapidly.

Mr. Choi told reporters Sunday he had survived on water seepage and by chewing on a cardboard carton.

"I feel like I am in heaven," he was quoted as saying when he awoke in a ward in suburban St. Mary's Hospital before dawn Monday.

"When I woke in the dark I

thought I was still down there, but then I realised a school friend was holding my hand, then the nurses came."

Yonhap News Agency quoted him as saying. Investigators tracing how the owners of the doomed store had been able to illegally modify the shoddily-built structure said the official who had approved the modifications had received a free \$15,800 membership to an exclusive country club.

The Sampoong owners, now under arrest for manslaughter, caused by criminal negligence, had allegedly given the club membership to Socho Ward office chief, Hwang Chol-Min, when he declared the modifications safe in 1990, they said.

Mr. Hwang's annual membership fees for three years, worth \$3,950, were also paid

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Dialogue before solutions

THE FOREIGN ministers of the eight Arab states who are signatories to the Damascus Declaration, authored in the wake of Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, have just concluded a meeting they held this week on a positive note. They called for more determined efforts to forge one united Arab front on all issues affecting the nation. While it is indeed progress for any group of Arabs to get together and call for unity, we must admit that we have a concern or two about what our brothers have just decreed. The big question is whether we, the Arabs, consist of one or several blocs. As long as there are limited Arab pacts and exclusive alliances, open to some and denied to others, the Arab Nation would remain deeply divided instead of being united as called for by the eight, namely the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt and Syria.

On the eve of the Gulf conflict, the Arab World had three major alliances grouping most Arab countries except Syria. Those were the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), the Maghreb Union and the GCC. The ACC (which grouped Jordan, Egypt, Yemen and Iraq) was the first victim of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It has since been put in deep freeze. The Maghreb Union also did not record any big, or small, successes. Its members have more differences than they have in common. On the other hand, the GCC (which groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain) has cracks in its walls as a result of differences that appeared in the aftermath of the Gulf conflict. And the Arabs' overall umbrella, the Arab League, seems to be out of it for now. In fact long before, during and after the Gulf crisis the League failed to avert any crisis between any two of its members.

While the Arab Nation seems to be afflicted by so many problems, there are nevertheless some signs of hope. The recent rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the scaling down of the conflict between Sudan and Egypt, repeated calls for ending sanctions on Iraq and reports of imminent reconciliation between Jordan and Saudi Arabia are all signs that the Arab leaders are finally coming to realise that the threats they face collectively are greater than those they pose to each other. If current efforts could lead to a full or mini-Arab summit that would be some achievement. Even more limited summits, like the hoped-for meeting between Their Majesties King Hussein and King Fahd, could make a lot of difference to the future of the nation. We say this because we believe that short of Arab leaders meeting one another and hammering out outstanding issues, nothing of tangible magnitude could be achieved.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily decried the role of the United Nations and questioned the reason behind the Arab countries' membership in this organisation which, he said, is working against the Arab Nation's interests. Citing the UN failures in Palestine, Somalia, Afghanistan, the Western Sahara and Iraq, Tareq Masarwah said the world organisation has proved its total failure largely because it remains under the influence of the United States and its allies. Referring to the U.N. failure in Bosnia, the writer said the Western powers are not taking serious measures to stop the conflict because there is no oil or other interests for them to protect in that region. He said the U.N. has failed to provide protection to the Kurds because an ally of the Western powers is involved in war against the Kurdish population. The United States is by no means eligible to lead the United Nations in matters to safeguard world peace because it has been steering the world organisation in a manner that would protect its own selfish interests and those of the wealthy Western nations, continued the writer.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour urged the Ministry of Supply to fix the prices of coffee and restrain the excessive greed of the merchants who deal with this popular commodity. Mohammad Daoud said that the price of coffee in Jordan is still high, two months after the sharp drop in its world prices; but the government was doing nothing in this matter. Refuting excuses given by merchants that they had bought the coffee at previous high prices, the writer said that these same merchants hiked the coffee prices the minute they heard of the frost that ruined Brazilian coffee causing world coffee prices to soar, though their stores were full of coffee purchased at the previous lower prices. As long as the merchants are allowed to raise the coffee prices the minute they hear the world price increases, they ought to be forced to bring these prices down the moment these prices decline, said the writer.

The View from Fourth Circle

Arabian golf ball cleaners and the business of tourism

By Rami G. Khouri

OF ALL the economic and social sectors where Mideast peace may usher in new hopes and opportunities, the most obvious to date is tourism — but it is also among the most dangerous — in terms of the long-term well-being of Jordan's human culture, social fabric and natural environment.

The rapid expansion in the tourism sector during the past half year has seen a sharp (nearly 100 per cent) increase in tourist arrivals, rising employment and substantial expressions of intent to invest in hotels, bus companies and other new tourism projects. This is good news for those in Jordan, including myself, who believe that a sensible tourism policy can contribute significantly to the economy while also playing the equally important role of promoting mutually beneficial and enjoyable people-to-people contacts with visitors from other lands and cultures.

The danger, however, is that the volume, allure and political muscle of private sector money in the tourism sector may very well overwhelm the capacity and the desire of the government to provide the sort of quality controls and environmental and social safeguards that are necessary to keep tourism from developing into a negative force in our country. Will government licensing promote tourism that is as beneficial to Jordan and Jordanians as it is to foreign firms and investors? Will rapid and large-scale tourism expansion promote a healthier or a more destructive attitude among Jordanians to their natural and historical heritage sites?

The track record of our country is very mixed in this respect. The touristic and urban development of Aqaba, for example, has been quite coherent and stringent, and most of the important natural attractions remain relatively well-protected; but the development of Petra and Wadi Musa has been haphazard and chaotic, especially the government's licensing of major new hotels in the immediate vicinity of the antiquities site.

This suggests to me that when the Jordanian private sector and international investors flex their muscles, they can do virtually anything they please; and they can justify it in terms of the new gods that we are being conditioned to worship — creating jobs and increasing foreign exchange income. If tourism does not benefit ordinary Jordanians in an equitable manner, and instead primarily satisfies the aims of foreign travellers and investors, then I suggest we need to completely rethink why we attract tourists and how our country can benefit from promoting the tourism sector.

I was both pleased and worried to read recently that local, regional and international investors have submitted offers to invest more than JD 200 million in tourism projects along the northeast coast of the Dead Sea. Other areas in Jordan may experience a similar rush of investments, such as Wadi Rum, Madaba, Umm Qais, the south coast at Aqaba and perhaps Pella and Azraq.

These sites are remarkable for their combination of unspoilt, almost pristine natural beauty, easy accessibility to important antiquities and the very relaxed, natural interaction that can occur between visitors and native.

These assets, however, may be seriously and irreparably damaged by tourism development projects that place a higher premium on cash flow than on preserving the deeply satisfying natural attributes and human values that define the best of Jordan and its people. How many times these days do visitors at Petra, for example, interact with local residents in a manner that goes beyond cash transactions, bargaining and asking for tips?

We already have several troubling examples of what can happen when a fast, large influx of tourist money descends upon a traditional Jordanian community. Economic distortions result in very high land prices, which make life difficult for young people who find it increasingly difficult to buy, build or rent a home. Tourism merchants and service personnel, despite their honourable nature, often find it irresistible to engage in price gouging, over-charging and flagrant commercial exploitation of foreign visitors. Jordanians today increasingly get into the business of pirating tourism books and videos. Natural environments slowly give way to new buildings and the destructive pressures of large numbers of tourists in small areas, often without sufficient sanitary facilities. Traditional crafts slowly change to suit the tastes of international markets, sometimes totally losing touch with their ancestral cultural legacy — Europeans and Americans will buy purple magazine holders for their bathrooms, so Jordanians weavers and embroiderers will produce these novel items. The acceptable promotion of our antiquities and natural sites has slowly expanded into the more problematic marketing and selling of our own human culture, which we seem willing to change to suit foreign commercial tastes.

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the social and natural fragility of our tourist sites is the fact that most destruction there is carried out by Jordanians. The black market in antiquities is a local enterprise, and almost all of the destructive, ugly graffiti on our ancient monuments is the work of Jordanian and other Arab visitors — as any informal inventory of the names spray-painted or scratched into the monuments will confirm: Not many Peters or Siegfrieds, but lots of Majids and Ahmads. Most of the litter and human feces at the sites is deposited there by local visitors, and the schoolchildren who run around picking the roses at the Jerash resthouse are Jordanian children, not foreign tourists.

These are uncomfortable but true facts that we ignore at our peril. I mention them with much sadness, but in the spirit of desiring to promote a more vigorous focus on the full realities and consequences of rapid tourism expansion in a context of such a delicate natural and cultural environment.

Tourism development in Jordan has given too much emphasis to satisfying the commercial aims of private Jordanian and international investors, without sufficient attention to spreading the gains of tourism more equitably among Jordanians. If this legacy is allowed to prevail in the coming few years of anticipated tourism expansion, we may have to accept the inevitability of some cultural and

environmental disasters in some remote sites that are now veritable gems.

To minimise this possibility, I recommend two actions. The first is establishing a national monitoring system that would track social, environmental, economic, cultural and political changes that occur at touristic sites. If we know what good and bad things happen at tourism sites that develop rapidly, we could promote the good and reduce the bad.

My second suggestion is quickly to establish — preferably this summer — a national system that can make the important impending decisions on tourism investments in a manner that taps the best minds in the country and among our many international friends and partners. It would be an act of great developmental sensitivity and political maturity, for example, for the planning, tourism, industry and commerce and municipal and rural affairs and the environment ministries (who are involved in various aspects of approving new investments) to hold public hearings about proposed major new tourism activities, especially in Wadi Rum, Umm Qais, the Dead Sea coast and Aqaba. It should be a mistake of nearly criminal magnitude, for example, to allow the licensing of large new hotels as close to antiquities and natural sites as has already occurred in Petra. We have no guarantee today that this will not occur again.

The minister of tourism and antiquities and his senior staff have already shown great determination and will to make the tough decisions that have to be made to assure the long-term, environmentally sustainable, and socially dignified development of the tourism sector. They will face enormous new political and commercial pressure in the immediate future, though, as hundreds of millions of dollars of investor funds seek new outlets in Jordan.

What will happen, for example, if a big-name international hotel chain with a politically powerful local agent offers to spend JD 20 million to build a golf resort and small airport between the mountains in Wadi Rum, with promises of local construction contracts, employment opportunities and a big new annual market of tens of thousands of high-spending Japanese, American and European golfers? Can the decision-making system in Jordan resist such offerings to the new commercial gods of the global marketplace?

I would find it very sad if the local inhabitants of Wadi Rum transformed their vehicles into Arabian golf carts, and the local handicraftsmen and women started producing Arabian Nights or Holy Land golf bags and hand-embroidered golf ball cleaning rags. Sounds ridiculous? Of course it does, because it is ridiculous. But in the present climate of escalating investor pressures to exploit our land and culture for their own profitability, it is more possible than ever before.

This moment of change, opportunity, hope and challenge calls for Jordanians in the private sector and non-governmental organisations to work closely with the government to make sure that we are not collectively overwhelmed and humiliated by the invisible hand of the marketplace that would have us forever dance for dollars.

Division along the Nile

By G.H. Jansen

IN THE first work of history ever written, Herodotus, "the Father of History", wrote in the fourth century B.C. "Egypt is the gift of the Nile" meaning not only that the soil of Egypt is made up of sediment deposited by the river but also that it is the water of the river used for Egypt's intensive cultivation that keeps Egypt alive.

But it is those same waters that are now the cause of contention between Egypt and the Sudan, through which the river flows before reaching Egypt from its sources in central Ethiopia and central Africa.

Or so it would seem, as has seemed to be the case for the past century. But, in truth, the proximate cause of the present crisis is not the Nile waters or a long-standing border dispute but the state of the psyche of Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, following the assassination attempt on him immediately after he arrived in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa for a meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

Mr. Mubarak's reaction was to hurry home to Cairo without entering the city. No "business as usual" stance for him. This was a humiliation for the Egyptian president but one which he brought down on himself.

Since Egypt immediately blamed Sudan for being behind Islamists who were responsible for the attack, Mr. Mubarak is seeking ways to punish Sudan. The Egyptians continue to blame Sudan even after the militant Islamic group in Egypt, Gamaat Al Islamiya, claimed responsibility for the shooting and even though police investigation showed that the gunmen killed in the attack were Egyptians not Sudanese.

So the Egyptians promptly stirred up more violence in the already disturbed area of Halaib which both countries claim and there have been deaths on both sides during the past fortnight. Halaib is a comparatively small triangle of land with its eastern side on the Red Sea and its southern side on the frontier line between Egypt and Sudan. This is a very old dispute, because as far back as 1899 a treaty placed Halaib in Egyptian territory though a

later treaty of 1902 said that it should be administered by Sudan: a sure prescription for subsequent trouble between the two countries that have never been particularly friendly with each other despite the fact, or because of the fact, that they are both dependent on the Nile.

During the exchange of verbal abuse between Egypt and Sudan, the latter made empty threats. On two separate occasions Sudanese spokesmen, one of them being Hassan Al Turabi, spoke of withholding Nile waters from Egypt. This was foolish not only because the Nile waters are a simple matter of life and death for Egypt — the later president Anwar Sadat is quoted as saying that water is the only issue for which Egypt could go to war again — but also because Sudan, topographically, is in no position to carry out this threat.

To withhold water from the Nile the Sudanese would have to build a very large dam across the river, due to the great volume of the Nile flow, especially during the annual flood season, and to create an equally large reservoir behind the dam. Like the monumental High Dam and Lake Nasser at Aswan in Egypt, which could not have been built without massive assistance from the USSR.

Such a vast scheme is quite beyond the capabilities of Sudan at the present time when she is bereft of friends because of Islamist and nationalist policies followed by the present army/ Islamic regime.

Policy considerations aside, the topography of the flat territory through which the Nile flows when traversing Sudan does not favour any such scheme. A dam and a reservoir can be built only where a river has high ground on either side between which the river waters can be impounded; otherwise the dammed water would inundate the surrounding countryside and turn it into a marsh-land like the vast area of the Sud in southwestern Sudan. Lake Nasser runs hundreds of miles behind the high dam because its banks are low. And they would be even lower along the course of the Nile in Sudan. The only place where such a dam could be built would

be at Roseires, a point just inside Sudan, where the Blue Nile debouches from the highlands of Ethiopia onto the lowlands of Sudan, and where a dam has already been built.

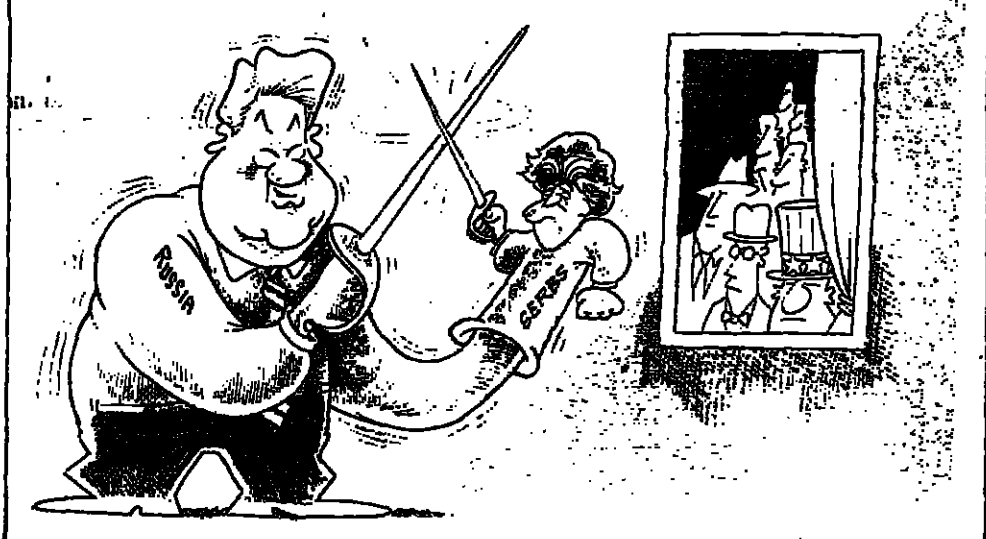
Building a dam anywhere along the upper reaches of the Blue Nile would not present a problem because the river runs through hilly country in Ethiopia which, if it built dams, could seriously harm both Egypt and Sudan. This could be one reason why Egypt has been careful not to complain against Ethiopia, not even for negligence in allowing the assassination attempt to take place just outside its capital city.

Present Sudanese policies have brought Sudan, alongside Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya, onto the list of "terrorist states" drawn up by the U.S. This situation has led at least one Palestinian political scientist to argue that the assassination attempt and the resulting hostility between Egypt and Sudan are nothing but a thinly camouflaged attempt to bring down the present militant Sudanese government. His argument goes on: Of these so-called "terrorist states" Iraq is crippled. Iran is far away. Syria is caught up in the peace process. Libya is marginal, which leaves Sudan as the only real threat to Pax Americana in the West Asian area.

Egypt accuses the Islamic regime of giving covert aid and comfort to the Islamic antagonists of the Mubarak regime in Egypt; while, for its part, Sudan accuses Egypt of giving aid and comfort, quite openly, to the Christian and animist groups in southern Sudan, who have waged a long-drawn-out civil war against Khartoum.

Besides the violence in the Halaib area, in yet another retaliatory act, Egypt has now decreed that the two million Sudanese living in Egypt — some of them for generations — must all acquire visas — of one month's duration. This requirement can only lead to most horrendous confusion, and corruption in the already inefficient and overburdened Egyptian administration. Although there are hundreds of thousands of Egyptians living in Sudan, Khartoum has said it would not retaliate.

M. KAHIL



Turkey's constitutional mire threatens EU deal

By Suna Erdem
Reuter

ANKARA — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller is back at square one this week in her bid to democratise the country's constitution after a conservative alliance in parliament sniped relentlessly at her every proposal.

But analysts and diplomats say Ankara's customs unions deal with Europe is in the balance unless the government can show, and soon, concrete progress in making Turkey more democratic.

Ms. Ciller froze debate on a series of constitutional changes on Thursday after parliament voted down an amendment to give public sector workers union rights. She said it was to allow a new consensus to form but gave no time for debate to resume.

Thursday's vote was just the last straw — progress on all other measures had also been painstakingly slow, despite an initial cross-party consensus to reform the constitution drawn up in 1982 by Turkey's generals, then in power.

"This was the one thing the European parliament was expecting Turkey would manage," a Western diplomat said.

"Ciller has to have something to show... There were three options — the release of the DEP MPs, Article 8, and this. This looked to be the easiest," he added.

The other possible measures the diplomat referred to were the release of six former Turkish MPs who

were jailed last year for supporting Kurdish rights, and an article in the constitution which hinders freedom of expression and has been responsible for jailing scores of writers and intellectuals.

European Union (EU) negotiators struck a customs deal with Turkey earlier this year that would give Ankara full access to European markets and is a significant stepping stone to EU membership.

But the European Parliament has still to ratify the deal and has made it clear it wants to see Turkey show, by action rather than words, it is committed to full liberal democracy.

In fact, the constitutional debate designed to achieve that has ended up throwing that commitment into question.

"It seems (local) political expediency came out tops against the advantages offered by the constitutional changes," Sedat Ergin, a columnist at Hurriyet daily, told Reuters.

On freezing the parliamentary debate, Ms. Ciller launched a bitter attack on opposition Motherland Party (ANAP) leader Mesut Yilmaz, whom she accused of jumping ship after pledging support.

From voting on other amendments in the package, it was clear ANAP deputies — and some from Ms. Ciller's own True Path Party (DYP) — had joined the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) in blocking measures in a powerful conservative block.

Ms. Ciller also faced some pressure from the other side, her liberal junior coalition partners the Republican People's Party (CHP), which occasionally tried to block measures they felt did not go far enough.

It was not clear where Ms. Ciller would go from here.

Some parliamentary analysts saw Thursday's freezing as a tactic to scare dissenters into supporting her, but others now see little chance of the changes being completed.

"This is one of the worst constitutions in the world," political columnist Mehmet Ali Birand said. "But I don't think there will be a consensus on it now... It has become mired in the bog of domestic politics."

He said Ms. Ciller would have to focus now on the narrower goal of scrapping Article 8, although some analysts say this is tougher than the process which has just broken down.

"Article 8 has become a matter of honour... It represents those tied to the old system versus the new," Mr. Birand said.

Early general elections are another option, although Ms. Ciller insists her coalition with the CHP will not split up.

ANAP is now calling for fresh elections.

Turkey's stock market plummeted recently when CHP ministers failed to turn up to a cabinet meeting, and grassroots supporters in the party accuse its leadership of being bullied by Ms. Ciller's party into compromising social democratic values.

Features

6 years after death, Kim Il Sung has power from beyond the grave

By Laura King
The Associated Press

SEOUL — Not long ago, North Korean cities and towns took down giant portraits of their late, autocratic leader, Kim Il Sung — and put up even bigger ones.

Nearly a year after his death, Kim still casts a long shadow over the isolated, impoverished country he ruled with absolute authority for 46 years.

The anniversary also raises new questions about the role of Kim's son and heir apparent, Kim Jong Il, a shadowy, uncharismatic figure whose influence still appears dwarfed by that of his dead father. No one knows why he hasn't fully assumed power yet.

"In a sense, North Korea is still ruled by Kim Il Sung," said South Korea's semi-official Naewoo Press, which monitors events in North Korea.

Kim, 82, died of a heart attack before dawn on July 8, 1994, according to North Korea. With typical secrecy, the government made no announcement for 34 hours. Thousands of weeping North Koreans filed past the flower-decked funeral bier.

In life, Kim was the centre of a personality cult, and death hasn't dimmed his luster as far as North Korea's official media are concerned. As the anniversary neared, they were pulling out the stops and piling on the accolades.

Yearning for the president is getting deeper as the days go by, the official Korean Central News Agency reported this week. It said more than 4,000 poems have been composed in his honour, together with songs "sung widely among the people."

A sample verse, titled "O Leader, our Leader," was said to describe "grasses and trees wringing in grief over Kim's death."

North Korea has not released any schedule of commemorative activities for this weekend, though media reports have described a variety of official tributes already in progress.

At least four new films celebrate Kim's accomplishments, and North-watchers say viewing is believed mandatory.

A recent symposium hailed Kim's philosophy of "juche," or socialist self-reliance, as a "brilliant model of literature and art of humankind," official reports say. Commemorative coins have been minted, worth about \$1,500 each — nearly three years' pay for the average citizen.

The younger Kim's power base remains a mystery. Rarely seen in public, he has been variously reported to be ill, under pressure

from hardliners, or mentally unstable. One thing is certain: He is taking care to follow in his father's footsteps.

North-watchers say a ponderous 45-page treatise on socialism recently appeared in Kim Jong Il's name — expressing views nearly identical to those of Kim Il Sung.

New North Korean diplomats still present credentials carrying the elder Kim's name. The younger Kim is even said to imitate his father's distinctive slanting handwriting.

Kim's posthumous political influence is largely read in Western diplomatic circles as a positive force. His death came in the midst of a high-stakes confrontation over the North's nuclear programme, one that he appeared to be moving to resolve.

Shortly before his death, Kim had met with former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, promising steps to allay concerns the North was assembling a nuclear arsenal. Arrangements were being finalised for a first-ever North-South summit.

Despite fits and starts after Kim's death, North Korea continued on the road to nuclear compromise. In October, an accord was reached under which the North agreed to accept replacement reactors and other benefits in exchange for ending its nuclear programme.

The accord has not yet been implemented, but tensions have eased markedly since last summer, when the North threatened to turn Seoul to a "sea of fire" if U.N. sanctions were imposed over the nuclear dispute.

Much of the North's motive for conciliation is a failing economy. Defectors report hunger and hardship, particularly in the countryside. Apparently fearing hunger could set off unrest, North Korea has begun accepting food aid from its southern rival and is even preparing to take rice from long-hated enemy Japan.

Despite hopeful signs, few observers expect consistently normal behaviour soon from North Korea. In private, Western envoys tend to let fly undiplomatic words like "nutty" and "weird" when describing the North.

In recent months, North Korea has repeatedly claimed that the armistice that ended the Korean War has outlived its usefulness. Some U.S. military officials express private concerns that the North could be planning some military provocation as a pretext for forcing direct peace talks that would snub South Korea.

Sudanese feel the bite of a worsening economy

By Salah Nasrawi
The Associated Press

KHARTOUM — Standing at a podium in a Chinese-built conference hall, Sudan's military leader extols the achievements of the Islamic revolution. Soon, he thunders, oil and gold will bring wealth, and dams will create reservoirs to water the desert.

On the other side of the Nile River, in another part of this sweltering capital, electricity flickers off for the third time in a day.

For Sudan's legions of poor, the failures of Lt. Gen. Omar El Bashir's regime are far better understood than his grand promises.

Six years after the country's democratically elected government was overthrown in a coup, the country struggles with a mountain of foreign debt and skyrocketing prices that put

even staples out of reach for most people.

Hardly a week goes by without one of its neighbours accusing Mr. Bashir's government of trying to export Islamic radicalism, making Africa's largest country one of the continent's most despised.

Its few allies — namely, Iran and Iraq — can do little but sympathise with its plight since both are isolated, themselves. And a long-running war with southern rebels shows no signs of ending.

Now, Sudan's leaders are locked in a bitter war of words with Egypt, its powerful and populous neighbour to the north, which accuses Sudan of plotting the June 26 attempt to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak during a visit to Ethiopia.

"I haven't been so weary and restless for more than 30 years," said Fatah, a shopkeeper in the Omdur-

man market, a dusty maze of shanties offering food, dry goods and clothes.

He sells shoes, but complains he can no longer earn enough to provide for his family of eight. A kilogramme of meat cost 17 Sudanese pounds in 1989. Now it costs 2,000 pounds, which is more than a week's pay for a civil servant even though it is worth only \$3.80 on currency markets.

"Ask me when was the last time I ate meat or any sort of decent food, and I can never tell," said Fatah, who agreed to talk with a reporter on condition that only his first name be used.

Life has never been easy in Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries. With an area more than one-third that of the continental United States, Sudan has long been seen as a potential breadbasket, watered by the Nile in the north and by rains in the south.

But successive govern-

ments — some civilian, some military — have failed to exploit its potential.

After the 1989 coup, the Islamic government — controlled by Hassan Turabi despite his lack of an official position — promised to turn Sudan into a showcase.

An economic reform programme instituted in 1992 removed subsidies on basic commodities like gasoline, flour and medicine. It introduced new taxes that apply to most people, including the poor.

The Sudanese pound was floated, and the exchange rate was set by the market rather than the central bank. Inflation set in.

"By God, tell me how can I buy a pair of sandals which cost 3,000 pounds when my (monthly) salary is only 9,000 pounds," said a government employee, who like many Sudanese refused to give his name.

Costs for transportation have increased tenfold since

the 1989 coup.

Government officials insist the economy is fine and even boast that unprecedented growth is on the horizon. In interviews, they dismiss complaints of hardship as exaggerations.

Abdullah Hassan Ahmad, the finance minister, said the economic programme has cut inflation from 118 per cent last year to 56 per cent. He says Sudan's economy grew 8 per cent last year and exported \$500 million worth of cotton, sorghum and other agricultural products.

Opposition figures contend exports totalled only \$250 million, compared with \$740 million in 1989.

"I don't say there are no problems or hardships, but we are optimistic and we try to put the economy on the move," Mr. Ahmad told the Associated Press. "We are far ahead now in most sectors."

Dr. Turabi and Mr.

Bashir paint a similar picture on the political front, claiming great strides in putting down a 12-year-long rebellion by black southerners resentful of decades of domination from the north.

But popular support seems lacking. Dr. Turabi's National Islamic Front fared poorly in the last democratic election in 1986.

Sudan's international isolation also shows no signs of ending. The U.S. State Department includes Sudan on its list of states that sponsor terrorism.

Opposition groups say the country faces disintegration.

In Cairo, Mubarak El Fadel El Mahdi, a former Sudanese interior minister living in exile, says conditions in Sudan are worse than they have ever been.

"One thing is sure about its future — it is steadily moving towards a total collapse," he said.

Songs of love and protest

By Cherif Cordahi

SHEIKH IMAM Eissa, who has died aged 76, had a wit and energy that made him the Arab World's most famous protest musician in the sixties and seventies. As secular Arab nationalism peaked, he symbolised popular and intellectual opposition to Egyptian presidents Nasser and Sadat.

Born in the village of Abu Nimrus, near Cairo, Imam, who was blind, studied Koranic recitation at the Sharia Association in Cairo. He was later influenced by the school of Sayed Darwish which used folk music to protest against British rule.

In 1962, Imam added his rhythmic folk music to the vernacular "beat" poetry of Ahmad Fouad Nigm. Until the mid-sixties Imam and Nigm played weddings and parties, then just as Nasser's brand of Arab socialism was peaking they shifted towards politics. One of Imam's most famous songs, Guevara is Dead, praised the Cuban revolutionary killed in Bolivia in 1968. But while the content of the duo's music was defiant, much of it was romantic in feel — theirs were songs that wafted out of windows on warm summer evenings. Then in 1967, in the Six Days War

with Israel, Arab armies suffered catastrophic defeat. Imam and Nigm pilloried the Egyptian army's performance — and got three year jail sentences.

Released in 1971, Imam was jailed again in 1972 by Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, for supporting groups that opposed his "infitah" — economic opening to the world. Throughout the decade Imam and Nigm were in and out of prison, while their popularity increased with every incarceration. In 1979, they became the first artists to be tried in a military court for attacking Sadat's policy towards Israel. Imam was acquitted.

During the eighties Imam toured Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, winning particular fame with North Africans, especially émigrés in Paris. But times changed. Egypt's peace with Israel "pulled the carpet from under our feet," says Nigm.

Imam died alone in the old Islamic quarter of Ghoriya near the University of Azhar. Meanwhile the political situation in Egypt and the Arab World is worsening. No one has yet emerged to take Imam's place.

The Guardian

Imam Eissa, July 2, 1918 — June 6, 1995.

Chechens inch back to life, still want freedom

By Anatoly Verbin

Reuter

GROZNY — Grozny's central market, once the finest in the Caucasus, is beginning to recover some of its old bustle and spirit amid the charred ruins of the city.

In ruined buildings which testify to the ferocity of the Russian artillery bombardment, cafes, hairdressers and even some one-man tourist agencies are opening up for business.

Chechens, defeated on the battlefield by Russian troops, are returning slowly to normal life and it is clear they have not abandoned their dream of independence from Moscow.

Even Salambek Khadzhev, prime minister in the Moscow-installed Chechen government admits that.

Asked whether a planned referendum on constitutional issues scheduled for November would include a question of Chechnya's independence or autonomy, he said:

"I do not know if it will be on the referendum but generally this question will always exist."

Many Chechens agree that Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudaev did a lot of harm to the state

during three years of rule. But their will to be free from Moscow has not wavered.

"We'll sort things out once the Russian troops have gone," is a common phrase on the lips of citizens in the devastated capital.

For nearly all Chechens, Shamil Basayev is a national hero after his bloody sortie into southern Russia last month.

Mr. Basayev and a small army of guerrillas held hundreds of hostages in a hospital in the town of Budennovsk for five days before escaping to Chechnya in a convoy of buses, taking 130 "human shield" civilians with them.

His action forced Moscow to start the first serious peace talks with the rebels. Many Chechens compare Mr. Basayev to Imam Shamil, who in the last century spent years fighting Russian troops trying to capture Chechnya.

"Chechnya was, is and will be forever," top Chechen negotiator Usman Imaev said defiantly last month. "We will not allow shame to fall on the Chechen people."

Although prices in the central market are cheap many people are clearly hungry. Occasionally a

drunken Chechen is spotted — a rare sight before the Russian troops seized the predominantly Muslim city in February.

Some people are still so shocked that they gather near their destroyed houses unable to do anything but look at them sadly.

In the village of Samashki, captured by the Russians with marked cruelty, children, silent and motionless from shock, play in the sand with empty artillery cartridges.

Makeshift street markets are opening in Grozny and elsewhere. More and more people appear in the streets, dressed miraculously in neat clean clothes in a city which has no running water or electricity.

Some people are adding a lick of paint to their houses to cover traces of bullets and shell fragments.

More and more cars speed along the Grozny roads dodging bomb craters and damaged electric cables.

Some people smile and more clearly have no grudge against the Russians as a nation.

But hatred and sometimes fear show in their eyes when they see Russian soldiers, many of them stripped to the waist, speed-

ing along the roads on top of armoured cars, toting their machineguns.

Silence falls immediately when Russian soldiers, most of them tipsy, come to the central market to eat grilled meat or sturgeon and have more vodka.

Even in a central building which houses the pro-Moscow Chechen administration most of Russian special police officers are drunk at night and stagger along corridors gripping their pistols.

Russian forces, sent to Chechnya on Dec. 11 to crush the region's drive for independence, finally won control of Grozny in February after weeks of fighting in which thousands of civilians were killed and tens of thousands fled as refugees.

Russians control most of Chechnya. But soldiers stationed outside villages still exchange stories of being attacked every night.

Sporadic shooting is heard every night in Grozny. Even during peace talks at an Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission last month there were occasional shots nearby, forcing both Russian and Chechen guards take up combat positions behind their vehicles.

Israel insists on control of water

(Continued from page 1)

intervention in the Israeli-PLO talks is somewhat up in the air.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher has given Mr. Ross wide authority to offer American proposals to bridge differences in both areas.

Israel hopes to hold a new round of autonomy negotiations with the PLO in a castle in the Italian city of Florence on Thursday, but nothing has been finalised, foreign ministry officials said.

Italy has proposed another venue, the officials said Monday, refusing to say where.

The negotiations were expected to resume in Italy as early as Monday, but PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has

dismissed the reports as "rumours."

Meanwhile the two sides will stage one day of talks in Cairo on Tuesday on the transfer of civil powers to the Palestinians in the West Bank, an army spokeswoman said.

Negotiators will focus on eight spheres of power: statistics, gas/petrol, industry/trade, postal services, agriculture, insurance, municipal affairs and labour, said Captain Hanneh Jeshurun.

In Hebron, in the West Bank, Israeli police on Sunday arrested two Palestinian cameramen and a woman journalist as they were filming a rally organised by the left-wing Peace Now group.

Chris Slaney, head of the Jerusalem bureau of the British television channel WTN, said the three had been arrested when scuffles broke out between demonstrators and Israeli settlers in the West Bank town.

Police intervened and took them to a police station.

"Police demanded 1,000 shekels (\$340) to free them, but they refused," Mr. Slaney said.

"We tried in vain to get army and police chiefs to intervene and now we have hired a Palestinian lawyer who has gone there to try to get them released. This is an intolerable obstacle to journalists' work," he added.

A spokesman for the Israeli group Peace Now has also protested at the arrests of the WTN cameraman and

his Reuters colleague as well as the woman Palestinian journalist from East Jerusalem who works for the Associated Press.

Right-wing Jews and Muslim officials exchanged blows Monday at the entrance to Jerusalem's western wall, police said.

The incident began when eight activists of the right-wing "Hai Vekayam" group tried to enter the wall and were stopped by police.

A scuffle developed when several officials of the Waqf, the Islamic trust that administers Muslim holy sites, arrived on the scene, he said. One of the Jews was lightly injured in the head.

All eight Israelis were detained for questioning and police said two Waqf officials would be arrested for assault.

S. Pacific slams French raid

(Continued from page 1)

to their dented vessel. Rainbow Warrior was justified to ensure respect for the law.

"Faced with operations that violate the law, we do what is needed to assure that the law is respected and we will continue to do so," prime minister Alain Juppe said.

France "does not live in fear" of actions by opponents of its decision to resume nuclear testing at the Mururoa atoll site in September, Mr. Juppe told reporters at his offices.

"We have a goal. The president of the republic has

made a decision because that decision appeared to him to be in the best interests of the nation. This view is shared by the government," the prime minister said.

France's allies in Europe shielded from criticising the raid in public though some privately expressed dismay over the strong-arm tactics.

"One could argue that they haven't done this very well. You would have thought they might have been a bit more sensitive, both in the way they did it and in the timing," said one diplomat from a major European ally.

Australia urges Israel to sign NPT

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans called on Israel on Monday to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to bolster regional and world security. After more than an hour of talks with his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres, Mr. Evans admitted they had not seen eye-to-eye on nuclear arms.

"I can't pretend we agreed every inch of the way on issues like the future of weapons of mass destruction," he told reporters.

"Australia is a very strong supporter of the NPT, obviously we would like to see Israel signed up to that treaty," Mr. Evans added that Canberra also wanted Israel to ratify the chemical weapons convention it has signed. And Arab countries should do the same, the minister said. "We would like to see the commencement of a serious dialogue process of building effective verification regimes and the spectrum of weapons of mass destruction and indeed conventional weapons as well." Australia takes part in the arms control and regional security talks as part of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace talks.

Delhi suspect arrested

(Continued from page 12)

"There is a threat to my life... please help me," Mr. Kumar said and collapsed on the floor of Magistrate Dharan Singh's courtroom. His mother died of cancer on Monday, lawyers said.

Manoj Kumar, the co-suspect's brother, said anonymous callers have been threatening the family since the arrest of Mr. Kumar following the Sahni's murder in Mr. Sharma's two-bedroom apartment in New Delhi.

"The life of everybody in our family is in danger," Mr. Manoj said.

The police have promised to extend protection to people who help detectives in solving the murder. It has

urged Mr. Kumar to testify against Mr. Sharma.

New Delhi's Police Commissioner Maxwell Pereira, who is scheduled to escort Mr. Sharma from Bangalore, said he was willing to deploy guards for Mr. Kumar's wife and two children.

Several others including another former Delhi Youth Congress leader, Maqbool Karim, have agreed to help police in the investigation and testify against Mr. Sharma.

The Congress leadership has distanced the 109-year-old party from Mr. Sharma and has launched an independent investigation into the crime.

Save Water ... Every Drop Counts

3 Iranian rebels killed

(Continued from page 12)

General Boutros Ghali and the U.N. Security Council urging international sanctions against Iran.

"The time has come to prosecute the crimes and impose international punishments on the ruthless mullahs who do not abide by any law or principle," he said in a statement received in Nicotia.

Mr. Rajavi also urged Iraq to prosecute and punish those found guilty of the attack.

Mr. Suleimani protested that Monday's shooting "was the 35th military or terrorist attack" Iran had staged against the people's Mujahadeen in Iraq since the start of 1993.

Iran, which has accused the Mujahadeen of carrying out most of the attacks inside its borders since 1981, officially asked Iraq in May to extradite Mr. Rajavi and other leaders of the group.

But the request was rejected.

EU pushes on towards single currency

NOTHIN'!
THE DOCTOR
ORDERED ME
TO GIVE UP
DRINKING!

AL SMITH

business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Cabinet allocates \$150m for electricity sector

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazah said the Cabinet decided to allocate \$150 million annually for generating electricity and purchasing equipment needed by the electricity sector. Mr. Darwazah said the decision was taken in view of the rising demand for electricity, pointing out that the industrial sector's consumption of electricity has risen by 10 per cent and the domestic consumption by eight per cent. The minister said the Council of Ministers also approved a request by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to purchase an electricity generation unit this month to produce electric energy and reduce the pressure on the operating units. He denied reports that Jordan was to face an energy crisis during the coming five-year period and said the cabinet's decision to buy generators and other equipment for \$150 million will meet any rise in demand for electric energy. He said a delegation from his ministry will visit Egypt later this month to hold talks with Egyptian counterparts on the possibility of getting natural gas from Egypt to Aqaba. He said the Egyptian gas will be used in operating electricity stations in the port city (Al Aswaq).

The Slaughter House Department of the Greater Amman Municipality destroyed 1,100 heads of refrigerated livestock imported from Russia by airplane after they were found unfit for consumption. Department Director Othman Kilani said the quantity had been not stored properly in the country of origin which rendered it unfit for consumption (Al Ra'i).

Director General of the Agricultural Credit Corporation Mohammad Arabiyat on Sunday met with a delegation representing the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for talks on the possibility of giving the ACC a role in a project to preserve water and soil carried out by IFAD. The delegation will visit the ACC's branches in Karak and Tafleh to become familiarised with progress achieved in projects financed by IFAD (Al Ra'i).

Jordan loses about JD 12 million annually because of livestock dying as a result of eating plastic bags scattered in pasture lands, according to Chairman of the Veterinary Sciences Department at the Jordan University of Science and Technology Nabeel Heilat. Dr. Heilat said animals eating these bags suffer from symptoms similar to cancer. He said of 300 surgeries operated on livestock last year, plastic bags were discovered inside 130 animals. He added that plastic material which contains polystyrene might be digested by animals, and this can threaten people who consume their meat (Al Ra'i).

Debtors seek easier terms for bad debt repayments

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwaiti debtors said Sunday a government proposal designed to make it easier for them to repay some \$24 billion in bad debts was still unsatisfactory, and warned that it could lead to economic collapse. "We do not want to be treated unjustly and we need time to be able to repay," said Badr Al Sharan, a businessman speaking for the assembly that calls itself the Economic Group subject to law 41/1993. The debts, some owed by members of the ruling Al Sabah family, were incurred in a stock market crash 13 years ago and during a seven-month Iraqi occupation, which ended in February 1991. The central bank bought the debts from nine private banks after liberation. A 1993 legislation gave the 10,400 debtors the choice of immediate repayment of up to 45 per cent of the debt, or an interest-free, 12-year programme of annual payments. But the government says most debtors will not have the means to meet a September deadline. On Wednesday, it endorsed a controversial bill that would give debtors 20 years to repay their dues in installments, or the chance to pay them in five annual installments starting in September next year. Mr. Al Sharan said the proposed amendments, just like the 1993 law, ignored the fact that many debtors, especially those who suffered losses during the Iraqi occupation do not have the means to make these payments. The amendments were expected to also spark a confrontation between the cabinet and the opposition-dominated parliament, which has to approve it. The economic group wants debtors to be given a grace period of two years. Those who cannot repay, should have the option of settling their dues from their annual profits, it says. Mr. Al Sharan warned that when Kuwaitis sell their assets in order to repay their

debts, prices in the stock and real estate markets will plummet and many businesses will collapse. Most legislatures disagree with the government plan, charging it would waste public funds at a time the emirate is struggling to close unprecedented budget deficits caused by low oil prices and the costs of the Gulf war. "This is a weird government we have," said Islamic deputy Nasser Al Saneh in a recent public session. "If a citizen is late paying his 100 dinar (\$333) telephone bill they disconnect his line. But to someone who owes 100 million dinars (\$333 million), they say you can pay after 20 years."

Spain orange dispute stalls Israel-EU trade pact

TEL AVIV (R) — A dispute with Spain over the entry price of Israeli oranges is holding up the signing of a renewed economic accord with the European Union, Israeli Agriculture Minister Yaacov Tsur said on Monday. Mr. Tsur said Spain is seeking an entry price that is unacceptable to Israel and added that he has discussed the matter with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who has promised that Israel will not sign any accord until the issue is resolved. Israel has gotten caught up in a fishing dispute between Spain and Morocco. Since oranges from the north African country would benefit from the same favourable terms granted to Israeli citrus, Spain has decided not to settle the orange dispute until it resolves its problem.

EU fails to agree on cross-border banking rules

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Proposed regulations designed to increase consumer protection against overcharging and poor service by banks on cross-border money transfers failed to win approval from EU finance ministers here on Monday. The new rules, contained in a draft directive from the European Commission, were referred back to officials from further talks after the ministers failed to agree on a ceiling for automatic reimbursements. The directive, if passed, would oblige banks to disclose all charges involved in a transaction and to guarantee that money reaches its destination account within five working days of it being sent. If the target was not met or if money failed to arrive, consumers would be guaranteed full reimbursement. This was rejected by Germany and Belgium, who called for a ceiling of 5,000 ECUs (\$6,500) on reimbursements, arguing that anything more would increase banks' costs through a need for higher capital backing to guarantee transfers.

Finland, Italy, Sweden and the U.K. all backed the commission's proposal, although they indicated they were willing to accept a 50,000 ECUs ceiling, as has been proposed by the European Parliament.

The Commission proposed EU-wide legislation last year after a three-year campaign failed to persuade the banks to clean up their act on a voluntary basis. A commission study revealed that banks charged an average 25.4 ECUs to make an urgent transfer of 100 ECUs (\$130) and that even for such a small amount, the transaction took more than four days.

Charges were imposed on both receiver and sender of the money in 36 per cent of cases and only one in five banks could accurately predict how long the transfer would take.

Swiss banks to investigate holocaust victims' accounts

TEL AVIV (AP) — Swiss bank officials have agreed to name an independent arbiter to help restore thousands of bank accounts opened by Jews killed in the holocaust to their rightful heirs, a Jerusalem Magazine reported. The Jerusalem report, in an issue published Tuesday, said a formal announcement is expected within weeks. The decision follows the magazine's publication last month of an article detailing the obstacles faced by relatives trying to claim money left in Swiss banks by holocaust victims. The relatives have been thwarted by Switzerland's notorious bank secrecy laws, under which banks can refuse to release account information unless the depositors or their heirs have specific documentation — often missing in the case of holocaust victims. Estimates of the current value of the unclaimed accounts range from tens of millions of dollars to billions of dollars.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI				
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607173				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 10/07/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	NEW CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK P.C.	280	60930	218.000	218.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	7642	35706	4.670	4.680
CAIRO AMMAN BANK	1780	7893	4.550	4.510
BANK OF JORDAN	1500	4945	3.250	3.320
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	250	335	1.340	1.340
THE HOUSING BANK	3900	31785	8.120	8.150
JORDAN ESTATE BANK	212	595	2.830	2.820
JORDAN GULF BANK	1000	1282	1.300	1.260
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	1550	6045	3.900	3.900
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	3010	11253	3.750	3.730
UTOM BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	150	660	4.310	4.400
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	10422	43013	4.200	4.150
BEIT KHALF SAVING/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	700	2645	3.810	3.770
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	9500	10734	1.130	1.130
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	50150	78587	1.590	1.580
BANKS SECTOR	92039	296505	INDEX NUMBER: 180.87	CHANGE: -0.00%
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	7450	19773	2.650	2.680
JORDAN GULF INSURANCE	200	608	3.200	3.040
THE NATIONAL AELIA INSURANCE	2000	6000	3.100	3.000
INSURANCE SECTOR	9650	26381	INDEX NUMBER: 135.47	CHANGE: -0.12%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	31617	53045	1.690	1.680
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	3328	9627	2.830	2.940
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	370	8314	2.290	2.210
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	670	1030	1.030	1.030
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	500	335	0.670	0.670
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	5600	18537	3.310	3.310
SERVICES SECTOR	45575	91435	INDEX NUMBER: 132.47	CHANGE: -0.12%
ATTACHEMENT CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2000	2480	1.240	1.240
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	4250	16027	3.770	3.750
JORDAN PROSPERITY MINES	7592	23192	3.050	3.070
THE ARAB POTASH	1300	6702	5.150	5.170
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	1902	19584	10.300	10.300
THE INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	345	1136	3.380	3.300
THE JORDAN WORTED MILLS	100	790	7.950	7.900
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	4672	22932	4.930	4.890
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	100	595	4.250	4.250
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	250	575	2.350	2.300
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	850	2182	2.610	2.560
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	3550	13490	3.800	3.800
PAPYR INDUSTRIES	600	1512	2.520	2.520
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3486	27727	7.950	8.000
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	13512	10632	0.780	0.790
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	3375	19335	5.800	5.740
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10700	5425	5.000	5.000
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	4400	6116	1.390	1.390
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	1295	1519	1.180	1.170
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	250	578	2.350	2.310
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	100	425	4.250	4.250
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	450	527	1.170	1.170
ARAB CENTER FOR FARM. & CHEMICALS	150	339	2.230	2.260
KAWAYER INVESTMENT	889	1368	1.500	1.540
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1273	4072	3.200	3.200
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	1305	2792	2.160	2.140
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	3650	6886	1.910	1.880
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	72425	199417	INDEX NUMBER: 120.95	CHANGE: -0.23%
GRAND TOTAL	219689	613737	INDEX NUMBER: 156.10	CHANGE: -0.07%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET		117528		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET		136933		

Financial Markets

Jordan Times

In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 7/11/95	Tokyo Close Date: 10/11/95
Starting Pound*	1.5965	1.5960**
Deutsche Mark	1.3923	1.3958
Swiss Franc	1.1582	1.1595**
French Franc	4.8535	4.8590**
Japanese Yen	86.75	87.55
European Currency Unit	1.3290	1.3275**

* 1995 For STG

** Source: Reuters © 2000 GMT

Precious Metals				
Date: 10/7/1995				
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz
Gold	385.55	1.50	Silver	5.16
				0.120

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin				
Date: 10/7/1995				
Currency	Bid	Offer		
U.S. Dollar	0.6960	0.6980		
Sterling Pound	0.1088	0.1143		
Deutsche Mark	0.4987	0.5012		
Swiss Franc	0.6004	0.6034		
French Franc	0.1435	0.1440		
Japanese Yen	0.7950	0.7990		
Deutch Gulder	0.4453	0.4475		
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000		
Italian Lira	0.0434	0.0436		
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000		

Other Currencies				
Date: 10/7/1995				
Currency	Bid	Offer		
Bahraini Dinar	1.8300	1.8420		
Lebanese Lira	0.04085	0.045025		
Saudi Riyal	0.1852	0.1902		
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2950	2.3550		
Qatari Riyal	0.1900	0.1912		
Egyptian Pound	0.1900	0.2160		
Omani Riyal	1.7800	1.8120		
UAE Dirham	0.1898	0.1880		
Greek Drachma	0.2735	0.3275		
Cypriot Pound	1.4965	1.5850		

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3552/62	Canadian dollar
	1.3958/68	Deutschmarks
	1.5638/48	Dutch guilders
	1.1600/10	Swiss francs
	28.67/71	Belgian francs
	4.8580/30	French francs
	1614.09/0	Italian lire
	87.15/25	Japanese yen
	7.2350/50	Swedish crowns
	6.1990/40	Norwegian crowns
	5.4340/90	Danish crowns
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One ounce of gold	\$385.75/386.15	

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Al Faisali win 9th Jordan Cup

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Faisali Monday won their fourth consecutive and record ninth Jordan Cup when they upset Al Ramtha 4-0 in the final match of the competition held at Petra Stadium in Al Hussein Youth City.

Al Ramtha were bidding for the country's second most important soccer title after finishing in the runner up position for the past two years. However, the country's top striker, Jijes Tadros, completed a hat-trick in the second half while teammate Ja'far Hamud added another goal to seal their team's win in the 16th Jordan Cup.

Al Ramtha were the titleholders in 1990. The other final round qualifiers were Al Hussein, who clinched their first major title when they won the 1994 Federation Shield and Al Arabi who have a modest record and were the winners in 1986.

In the final round, Al Ramtha had crushed Al Arabi 6-0, while Al Faisali also beat Al Arabi 2-0 and had a goalless draw with Al Hussein.

Twenty eight teams from the first division and the Premier League entered the Jordan Cup Cup. The most surprising result was Premier League champions Al Wihdat's elimination by Al Baqa'a.

Jordan Cup record (Runners up in brackets)

1980	Faisali (Baqa'a)
1981	Faisali (Ramtha)
1982	Wihdat (Abli)
1983	Faisali (Ramtha)
1984	Jazreh (Abli)
1985	Wihdat (Faisali)
1986	Arab (Jazreh)
1987	Faisali (Husseini)
1988	Wihdat (Faisali)
1989	Faisali (Ramtha)
1990	Ramtha (Husseini)
1991	Ramtha (Wihdat)
1992	Faisali (Wihdat)
1993	Faisali (Ramtha)
1994	Faisali (Ramtha)

Tour de France

Indurain beats clock to seize yellow jersey

SERAING, Belgium (R) — Tour de France king Miguel Indurain moved a step closer to an unprecedented fifth consecutive tour triumph when he won Sunday's crucial eighth stage, an individual time-trial, to capture the overall lead.

Looking effortless despite stifling heat, the mighty Spaniard covered the demanding 54 km in the countryside near the Belgian city of Liege in one hour four minutes 16 seconds to take the coveted yellow jersey from Belgian Johan Bruyneel.

Indurain had sounded a warning with a brilliant ride in Saturday's seventh stage to Liege, breaking away with Bruyneel to take second place and climb eight places up to second overall.

While not quite as devastating as his previous performances in time trials, Indurain's masterful display on Sunday was good enough to give him control before Monday's rest day and the tough Alpine stages which follow.

Former race leader Bjarne Riis of Denmark came close to staging a major upset when he clocked the fastest time after 49 kilometres. But he was exhausted when he reached the final climb and ended the stage in second place 12 seconds slower than Indurain.

All eyes were on world hour record holder Tony Rominger of Switzerland, regarded as one of the few men capable of depriving Indurain of victory in Paris, but he 34-year-old veteran could do no better than third, 58 seconds behind the Spaniard.

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Paul Gascoigne (left) and David Platt in an England match (File photo).

Gascoigne completes move to Rangers

GLASGOW (AFP) — Paul Gascoigne returned to British football in the biggest-ever deal involving a Scottish club when he completed his 4.3 million pounds move (about seven million dollars) to Scottish Champions Glasgow Rangers from Italian club Lazio on Monday.

Gazza-manic greeted the 28-year-old injury-plagued England midfielder when he arrived to a huge welcome at Ibrox Stadium with a couple of thousand Rangers' fans turning out to salute their club's new signing.

The deal is the biggest ever by a Scottish club and a statement of European Cup intent by Ibrox chairman David Murray and manager Walter Smith.

Gascoigne admitted: "I knew Rangers was a very big club and the ground is already a sell-out every week but seeing this kind of welcome excites me."

"I trained with the lads this morning and I'm already very excited about this move."

"I've followed some great England players who've come here before like Ray Wilkins, Chris Woods and Terry Butcher and the current team is full of international players," he added.

Gascoigne insists half a dozen pre-season games will help him tune up for a European Cup preliminary round with Rangers on August 9.

"I've come here to enjoy my football. That is what it is all about. I don't know how many games it will take for me to feel fully fit but we have seven or eight pre-season ones coming up. I hope that will be enough."

Rangers' manager Smith said: "I feel Paul's type of midfielder player will be of great benefit to us and that's why I wanted to sign him."

Chairman Murray said: "We did well in a European Cup three years ago and have suffered disappointments in the past two seasons."

"That is where our ambitions lie but we also want to win 10 titles in a row in Scotland. We are delighted to sign Paul and we have a lot of belief in him."

Gascoigne becomes Rangers' club record signing with the 4.3 million pound fee exceeding the four million pounds paid two years ago to Dundee United for Duncan Ferguson, now of Everton.

Gazza will leave with Rangers for a three-match tour of Denmark at the end of the week and is likely to make his debut against Brondby on July 21.

Home fans will see him take his Ibrox bow at the Rangers International Tournament on July 29-30 when his former club Tottenham are among the visitors.

Gascoigne had an unhappy time at Lazio particularly under the authoritarian coaching style of Zdenek Zeman. They fell out over which position suited Gascoigne and a move became inevitable.

Although he was popular with the fans it was noticeable that his proposed sale did not incite the fans into the hysterical reaction that followed the news that their leading striker Italian international Giuseppe Signori was being sold to Parma which was subsequently cancelled.

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Arsenal land Platt for \$7.58 million

LONDON (AFP) — England captain David Platt ended months of speculation about his future on Monday when he joined Arsenal in a 4.75 million pound (about \$7.5 million) move from Italian giants Sampdoria.

The Gunners' new manager Bruce Rioch cut short a holiday in Portugal and rushed to Italy to sign the 29-year-old midfielder.

Rioch will now team Platt with his other big Italian import, Dennis Bergkamp, the Dutch striker he bought for 7.5 million pounds from Inter Milan just three weeks ago.

Monday's deal ends a four-year spell in Italy for Platt who was considering a new two-year offer to stay at Sampdoria — a decision closely monitored by a host of top English clubs including champions Blackburn and his former club Manchester United.

But the former Aston Villa star jumped at Arsenal's offer when Rioch made it clear much he was wanted at Highbury.

Platt said: "Everything has happened far more quickly than I had anticipated mainly because Arsenal made it clear that they really wanted me."

"My talks with Bruce Rioch were exceptional. We hit it off straight away. He is a great communicator with some exciting ideas on tactics and a definite view on how he sees my fitting into his plans."

Rioch said: "I'm delighted to sign a player of David's calibre. I have admired him for a long time and through these discussions with him I have been very impressed by his knowledge, ambition and desire."

Platt had talks with Sampdoria's captain Roberto Mancini holidaying in the same Sardinian village about the promising young players that were coming through but Rioch's talks ended his indecision.

Sampdoria have indulged in a major clear out after their disappointing season failing to clinch a place in Europe. Their gamble on exchanging Italian first choice goalkeeper Gian Luca Pagliuca to Inter Milan for the ageing talents of his predecessor Walter Zenga and Italia 90 central defender Riccardo Ferri failed to pay dividends.

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- ★ 1990: Selected for Bobby Robson's World Cup squad and scores brilliant winner against Belgium in last minute of extra-time in second round match. Also scores in quarter-final victory over Cameroon and 3rd/4th place play-off defeat by Italy. Fellow professionals vote him Player of the Year.
- ★ 1991: Sold to Italian club Bari for 5.5 million pounds after scoring 50 goals in 121 league games for Villa.
- ★ 1992: Becomes Britain's most expensive footballer by moving from Bari to Juventus for 6.5 million pounds. Scored 12 goals in 2

Serbs attack safe areas; France offers U.N. help

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian Serbs attacked two U.N. safe areas in eastern Bosnia on Monday in defiance of a U.N. call to cease their attacks on the Srebrenica enclave or face possible air strikes. U.N. officials said.

France offered combat helicopters to the U.N. force in Bosnia to come to the aid of beleaguered Dutch peacekeepers in Srebrenica where Bosnian Serb tanks and infantry threaten the safe area.

Thirty Dutch troops armed with heavy machine guns and anti-armour weaponry have been deployed with four armoured personnel carriers to block the main southern approach road leading into Srebrenica in western Bosnia.

The U.N. has issued an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs whose tanks are just 500 metres away stating that North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) warplanes will be called in if the peacekeepers are attacked.

The Serbs were also asked to cease their offensive on the enclave and release 30 Dutch peacekeepers seized over the weekend as Serb infantry pushed deep into the pocket.

Despite this warning, Serb forces continued to shell the town Monday and kept up sporadic mortar and heavy machine gun fire on another U.N. designated safe area, the nearby government-held enclave of Zepa.

wounded in Zepa. Mortar explosions close to a U.N. compound in the town caused no injuries.

"If repeated, sustained and systematic attacks continue, it will lead us to consider the option of using NATO air power in this instance as well," said U.N. Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward.

The warning was repeated by U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, who held a weekend meeting with top U.N. military commanders and civilian officials.

"According to the mandate of the United Nations we are ready in case of need to use the air force with the cooperation of NATO," Dr. Ghali said. "The mandate we have received is to protect different enclaves."

But Bosnian government officials showed increasing frustration with the ineffectiveness of U.N. forces to protect the so-called "safe area."

Hajrudin Avdic, a Srebrenica city official, issued a veiled threat, saying that if U.N. troops do not intervene in Srebrenica, he could not "guarantee their security on these territories."

"He warned that Dutch peacekeepers in the enclave might be blocked."

"If a slaughter happens to us, I don't think they (peacekeepers) would get by so easily," he said.

A Dutch patrol travelling in an armoured personnel carrier to the west of the town was attacked Monday by Bosnian government troops with small arms and grenades. The badly dam-

aged vehicle veered off the road, but the crew were not seriously hurt and were rescued by another Dutch unit, Col. Coward reported.

The government-held northeastern Tuzla, meanwhile, up to 100 refugees from Srebrenica gathered outside a U.N. base and warned they would block the compound unless U.N. soldiers stopped Serb attacks on their hometown and returned to their observation posts.

For their part, rebel Serbs failed to respond Monday to U.N. demands to release the detained peacekeepers and withdraw from positions they captured inside the Srebrenica enclave since Thursday, when the Serb offensive began.

Twenty peacekeepers were taken to Serb-held Bratunac, north of the Srebrenica enclave, and 10 were in a Serb-held village to the south. Col. Coward said the United Nations was in radio contact with all the detained soldiers.

The aid agency Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF), which has international staff in Srebrenica, said the town's hospital had reached "saturation point" caring for some 50 wounded civilians. 10 of whom had since died. Several needed limbs amputated.

A statement issued in Paris by MSF said local medical teams were working non-stop to cope with the influx of injured. Most of the injuries were caused by shrapnel, MSF said.

U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) officials condemned Monday's attacks.



SUDANESE MESSAGE: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday receives Sudanese Minister of State Mahdi Ibrahim (centre), who delivered to him a message from President Omar Hassan Al Bashir to His Majesty King Hussein, in a meeting attended by Sudanese Ambassador to Jordan Ali Abdul Rahman Numeiri (see page one) (Petra photo)

Majesty King Hussein, in a meeting attended by Sudanese Ambassador to Jordan Ali Abdul Rahman Numeiri (see page one) (Petra photo)

Israeli shelling injures 2 in Lebanon

TYRE (Agencies) — Heavy Israeli artillery fire wounded two young girls on Monday as dozens of shells rained on villages in Southern Lebanon, police said.

The two girls were hurt in the area of Zibin facing the western edge of Israel's self-declared "security zone" along the two countries' border.

Two teenage sisters were killed on Saturday when an internationally banned dart shell fired by Israeli tanks slammed into their house in Nabatieh, also north of the occupied zone. Five people were wounded.

U.N. spokesman in Lebanon Timor Guekeel told the Israeli daily Maariv that at least one cluster bomb banned under the Geneva Convention had been used in Saturday's attack.

He said U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali had been informed. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin criticised Saturday's attack as "superfluous."

In retaliation, about 30 Katyusha rockets fired by guerrillas fell on Israel's Galilee region on Sunday, forcing Jewish communities to bomb shelters for a second night.

The rockets fell in fields in western Galilee and caused no injury or damage. Israeli gunners fired back at Hizbullah positions in South Lebanon, military officials said.

The Arab League on Monday expressed "great concern" over Israeli attacks on Lebanese civilians.

The Arab League strongly condemns the continued flagrant attacks on South Lebanon, which are a clear violation of all Security Council resolutions, it said in a statement.

The league said continued Israeli attacks would endanger the Middle East peace process.

It urged the United States and Russia, which are co-sponsors of the peace negotiations, "to pressure Israel and force it to stop its milit-

ary operations in South Lebanon."

Syria said it had told the United States that the way to resolve problems in South Lebanon was to stop Israel shelling women and children there.

"Israel is the one shelling civilian villages and killing women and children, stopping these actions will solve the problem," Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam told the Beirut newspaper Al Safir on Monday.

Israel called Saturday shelling of the children's home in Nabatieh a mistake but made no mention of the anti-personnel shells which spray scores of steel nails on impact to cause the maximum loss of life.

Mr. Khaddam said Syria, which has 35,000 troops in Lebanon, was not ready to tell Hizbullah to stop fighting the Israeli occupation troops in Lebanon.

"We told the Americans when they called regarding the situation in the south... if

the Israelis withdraw then Hizbullah will not go after them to Haifa. Try Hizbullah by withdrawing, and only then will you know the answer," Mr. Khaddam said.

He did not say when the conversation with U.S. officials took place.

"Asking Hizbullah to stop the assistance implies an approval of the occupation on our side and that is not true," Mr. Khaddam said.

"What Hizbullah is doing in the south is a right protected by all international laws and no one on earth can demand from Hizbullah or any other movement resisting an occupation army to stop its resistance," he added.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres played down the tit-for-tat violence on the border with Lebanon.

"A mistake was committed by us," Mr. Peres said on the attack late Saturday.

"We don't have the slightest intention of escalating the tension in Lebanon," Mr. Peres said.

Sudan denies it tried to smuggle subversion material

CAIRO (Agencies) — Sudan on Monday denied Egyptian allegations that it tried to smuggle bomb-making material through Cairo international airport.

It also accused Egypt of violating international codes when it searched a diplomatic pouch Sunday and then accused a Sudanese diplomat of failing to declare telecommunications equipment.

"What the Egyptian authorities did is a dangerous violation of the oldest diplomatic rules, which protect diplomatic missions and international conventions," the Sudanese embassy in Cairo said in a statement.

"We had hoped that Egyptian authorities would have learned their lesson about making up accusations against Sudan with no proof, but then it came out with this new naive story," it added.

On Sunday, Egypt said it foiled a Sudanese attempt to smuggle bomb-making material through Cairo to Egyptian extremists in Sudan. Airport authorities also announced the discovery of the telecommunications

equipment.

On Monday, Egyptian security officials said they had intercepted yet another shipment destined for Egyptian extremists in Sudan.

They said it contained 155 certificates of military service, 240 identification papers, and a number of travel permits — all blank forgeries of Egyptian documents.

The three metal cases and two cardboard boxes — which were shown on Egyptian television — also included computer disks, video cassettes and books that Egyptian officials said were about bomb making, airplane hijacking and assassination. The cases also included pots and pans, vegetable crates and other kitchenware.

The officials said weapons also were found, but the exact nature was not disclosed. The cargo was intercepted by police late Sunday at Cairo airport en route to Khartoum, an official said.

The sender and receiver of the cargo was the same person and held a Yemeni passport, the official said. The individual's name was not re-

leased, but police described him as a "terrorist" leader hiding in Pakistan and traveling between Yemen and Sudan.

The official MENA news agency announced Sunday the seizure of a cargo "coming from an Asian country, destined for Khartoum via Cairo, and containing documents and equipment used by terrorists in Sudan."

"According to the agency, these documents contained information on weapons and explosives, the use of poisons, intelligence service activities, as well as combat techniques."

MENA said Sunday that walkie-talkies and their rechargers were also seized at the airport from the diplomatic pouch of an attaché working at the Sudanese embassy in Cairo.

Egypt accuses Sudan of arming and training Islamic extremists trying to overthrow its secular government — a charge that Khartoum denies, countering that Cairo gives Sudanese opposition

(Continued on page 3)

Ali Mahdi wants Sharia in Somalia

MOGADISHU (R) — Clan militia leader Ali Mahdi Mohammad wants Islamic Sharia law, with amputations for theft to execution for murder, imposed across Somalia to bring law and order to the anarchic country.

Mogadishu radio, which supports Mr. Ali Mahdi, quoted him late on Sunday as saying "implementation of Islamic Sharia law is the only way out of the present economic and socio-political problems in the country."

He made this call during talks with religious leaders in the northern enclave of Mogadishu which is controlled by his militias and where Sharia courts have been functioning since August 1994.

Sharia has become popular among many Somalis because the harsh system of punishments has helped drive off the streets armed thugs who have terrorised people since the country collapsed into lawlessness four years ago.

But Sharia has been opposed by Mr. Ali Mahdi's arch-rival Mohammed Farah Aided, whose clan militia controls parts of south Mogadishu.

Somalia had a secular constitution from independence in 1960 — although it has not been adhered to since all state institutions collapsed with the overthrow of the last government in 1991.

Most Somalis have aligned themselves according to their clan in the troubled 1990s. Religion and nationalism have so far failed to bring them together.

Many Mogadishu residents also point out that swarms of Gen. Aided's Habre Gedir clansmen have invaded Mogadishu and the fertile hinterland during the last four years of civil strife, occupying houses and vast swathes of farming land.

In north Mogadishu, the Sharia courts have served to return properties to their original owners.

The system was condemned by the United Nations mission, which spent billions of dollars trying to put Somalia back together between 1992 and March this year.

Lebanese unions call strike

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's labour unions called on Monday for strikes and demonstrations to force the government to scrap taxes announced last week by billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri.

The General Labour Confederation (GCL) issued a call for a one-day general strike and protest demonstrations across Lebanon for July 19.

A union committee within the GCL which groups port, electricity, insurance and public transport workers independently called a separate one-day strike for July 12.

The GCL said the general strike was to protest against taxes announced by Mr. Hariri last Thursday to pay for a 20 per cent pay rise for Lebanon's 120,000 public sector workers, including civil servants, army, police and security forces.

"The GCL repeated its absolute rejection of the taxes and import duties imposed by the government and called on it to revoke them," the union confederation said in a statement after a leadership meeting.

The earlier order, which was to remain in force for two weeks, sparked widespread protests with lawyers' for opposition parties and women's groups demanding the immediate arrest of Hariri.

The arrest came just hours after division bench of the Madras High Court Monday suspended bail given to Mr. Sharma following a nationwide outcry against the grant of protection from arrest to the prime suspect in the macabre case.

Judges T.S. Arunachalam and A. Thangamani ruled in Madras that police were free to arrest the high-flying former politician from Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's party.

The ruling came three days after a lower court in Madras granted "anticipatory bail" to Mr. Sharma in line with a procedure which offers advance protection to persons fearing arrest.

The government appeared brazen for a showdown, saying it had no intention of backing down.

"We will not go back on our decision for any reason," acting Finance Minister Fouad Siniora told a news conference as the GCL held its meeting.

The unions were particularly angered by a 38 per cent hike in the price of petrol ordered by the government on Thursday.

GCL leader Elias Abu Rizk said at the time that raising petrol prices in Lebanon, where there is virtually no public transport, was like raising the price of bread and it would have a roll-on effect on other commodities.

Unions, politicians and religious leaders have repeatedly warned the government it is facing a possible social explosion because it has paid too little attention to the needs of lower-income groups while pressing ahead with Lebanon's costly post-war reconstruction.

Mr. Hariri said his cash-strapped government, which is battling a huge budget deficit, could not grant the public sector pay increase with-

out raising money through taxes to pay for it.

To sweeten the pill for the unions, Mr. Hariri also announced higher taxes on luxury goods like cigars, lipstick, silk thread, salmon and caviar, whisky, wine and cigarettes and reduced taxes on popular staples like soup, macaroni, canned meats and tea.

But the GCL complained that the government had already approved the 20 per cent pay rise last December and said money for it had been included in the state budget. It said the government simply failed to send enabling legislation to parliament to implement the pay rise.

Schoolteachers, who provoked the pay rise demand with two strikes in recent weeks, rejected the proposed increase, complaining it would be delayed until October when parliament ends its summer holiday.

The schoolteachers are currently refusing to correct final examinations for tens of thousands of students who will be unable to apply for university places if they do not get their results.



Hugh Grant, Liz Hurley 'are history'

LONDON (AFP) — British actor Hugh Grant and his longtime love Elizabeth Hurley have broken up after his arrest with a known prostitute in California, the tabloid Sunday Mirror reported.

Several British tabloids ran pictures of Hurley and Grant taken Saturday in their Bath country home, and wondered in print if the couple's eight-year love affair would survive his several-minutes liaison with someone else in his car.

But the Sunday Mirror, quoting a "highly-placed source at Estee Lauder," said the pair decided to split up in order to preserve Hurley's career. She became a star model — landing an extremely lucrative deal with the Estee Lauder cosmetics company — partially on the strength of her association with Grant, who appeared in the hit Four Weddings and A Funeral.

"Really, what Liz has done is brought forward something which was already on the horizon, even before the hooker incident," the source said. "But the two have agreed to remain good friends." Meanwhile, Grant was to face U.S. television cameras with his first public comments since being arrested with a prostitute in Hollywood. Grant left London for New York Sunday night for an appearance on NBC's Late Show, a late-night talk show hosted by Jay Leno, a caustic-tongued personality who has been poking fun at Grant since he was arrested in his parked car with prostitute Divine Brown. The 34-year-old actor is charged with lewd conduct, a charge that carries a possible fine and jail sentence on conviction. "Leno is going for gold with this one," an NBC source was quoted in London as saying. "For the past week he has been flogging the subject to death on his show — every little comment he can make about Grant he is making."

Barbecue brings fire brigade to Buckingham Palace

LONDON (AFP) — Fifty firemen and no fewer than 10 fire engines rushed Sunday to Buckingham Palace after a fire alert only to find that the flames were from a barbecue in the royal stables, the fire service said. Firemen said that Sunday evening people living on Buckingham Palace Road running beside the palace reported seeing smoke. A man said he had seen clouds of smoke coming out of the buildings inside the palace grounds. "It was our predetermined response to an alert at the palace... But when we got there, the only flames were in a barbecue in the yard at the Royal Mews," a fire service spokesman said. Queen Elizabeth II is not in residence at Buckingham at the moment but is staying at Windsor Castle west of the capital.

Pope: Sexuality is key uniting men, women

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — Pope John Paul II said Sunday sexuality was the language uniting men and women, and expression of their love and yet also a gift from God to create new life. Sexuality affects the very nature of the human person and marital union, far from being reduced to satisfying an instinct, becomes a message allowing the expression of the profound union between two people, male and female," he told the crowds here. They give themselves to each other intimately, to express the total and definitive communion of their bodies, while at the same time being charged by and collaborating with God in the gift of life. Referring to a 15-page letter to women from the Pope to be published by the Vatican Monday, the Pontiff said he wanted to show them "the esteem and thanks of the whole Church." Citing the Bible and "God's desire to give men a companion," he added the difference between the sexes was based on a "key unifying factor: There is one being who exists in different but complementary forms, the male and female." It was precisely because women were different, from men but equal to them that they could be an "aid" to them, he said.

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